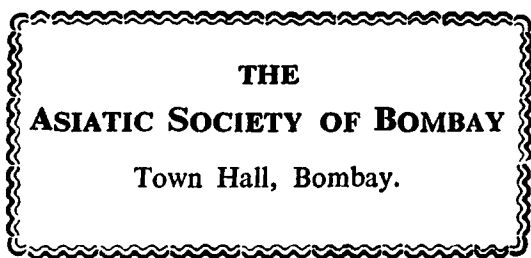




00066860

NOT TO BE ISSUED OUT
WITHOUT PERMISSION.



THE
AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHENTICITY
OF
ST JOHN'S GOSPEL

" Volat avis sine meta
Quo nec vates nec propheta
Evolavit altius :
Tam implenda, quam impleta
Nunquam vidit tot secreta
Purus homo purius."

—ADAM OF ST VICTOR, 1190.

" Bird of God ! with boundless flight,
Soaring far beyond the height
Of the bard or prophet old ;
Truth fulfilled and truth to be,—
Never purer mystery
Did a purer tongue unfold ! "

—DR WASHBURN.

THE
GOSPEL OF ST JOHN

ITS AUTHORSHIP AND AUTHENTICITY

€6860
ac



BY

WILLIAM CÆSAR, D.D.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCLXXVII



00066860

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

	PAGE
St John's Gospel much prized—Testimonies—Its Johannine origin disputed—Early assailants—Alogi—Uninfluential—Question at rest—Controversy reawakened—Evanson—Eckerman—Replies—Controversy seemingly settled—Renewal—Bretschneider—Strauss—Baur—Renan—Brief account of these, ...	1

I.

LIFE OF JOHN.

Native of Galilee—Account of Galilee—Parentage—Birthplace—Education—Occupation—Joins the Baptist—Follows Christ—Enjoys special favour—At Crucifixion—Visits Samaria with Peter—Leaves Judea—Resides in Asia Minor—Ephesus—Exile to Patmos—Release—Legendary life—Death, ...	23
---	----

II.

GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

Date—End of first century—Objectors assign later date—Not agreed—Evidence of early origin—What the Gospel says—Writer an eyewitness—The beloved disciple—John—Evidence of this—Objections to a Jewish authorship—Groundless—Chap. xxi. 24, 25—What tradition says—Unvarying—
--

In favour of John—How accounted for—Important as auxiliary evidence—What the early Church says—Citation and allusion—Testimonies—Hermas—Ignatius—Polycarp—Papias—Hippolytus—Basilides—Epistle to Diognetus—Justin Martyr—Tatian—Theophilus of Antioch—Irenæus—Muratori Fragment—Ancient versions—What heretics and heathens say—Marcion—Clementine Homilies—Gnostics—Montanists—Christian Ophites—Celsus—Value of testimonies, ...	44
--	----

III.

SILENCE OF EUSEBIUS.

Inference—Exaggerated—Explanation—Purpose of Eusebius—Not to give evidence for undisputed books—Silence confirmatory of John's authorship, ...	143
--	-----

IV.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

Differences between Gospel and Apocalypse—Similarities—Explanation—Difference between John's Gospel and Synoptics—Renan's view—'Supernatural Religion'—Individuality of Gospel writers—Explanation—No contradiction—Different aspects of Christ's life—Coincidences—Agreement in doctrine—Scene and duration of Christ's ministry—In Galilee chiefly, and short, according to Synoptics—In Judea chiefly, and longer, according to John—Accounts, though seemingly at variance, reconcilable—Date of Last Supper and Crucifixion—Scripture accounts—Agree as to day of week—Seemingly not as to day of month—Jewish Passover—Name—Time of killing the lamb—Time of eating the Passover—Feast of unleavened bread—Other paschal sacrifices—Paschal supper—Question at issue—Objections founded on seeming discrepancy—Accounts reconcilable—Expressions in Synoptics apparently confirmatory of John—Other reasons—Paschal controversy—Account of—Polycarp and Anicetus—Appolinaris and Melito—Victor and Polycrates—Bearing of controversy on John's Gospel—Misunderstood—Does not affect genuineness of Gospel, ...	154
--	-----

CONTENTS.

vii

V.

MEDIATE AUTHORSHIP. .

Meaning of term—Theory indefensible—Objections—Minute- ness of detail—Unity—Mr Matthew Arnold—His <i>logia</i> —His reasoning—Unsatisfactory and inconclusive—Solely the work of John, ...	222
---	-----

VI.

TIME AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION.

Last written of the Gospels—In the apostle's old age—After the destruction of Jerusalem—Meyer—At Ephesus—Other opinions—Conjectural, ...	233
--	-----

VII.

DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL.

Different opinions—Writer's testimony—Supplemental hypo- thesis—Eusebius—His account—According to this theory, John had the other Gospels in his possession—No evidence of this—Reasons against it—Complete in itself—Polemical hypothesis—Long cherished—Examination of—Supposed antagonism to Cerinthus—No evidence of this—To Ebion- ites—To Docetæ—Equally untenable—Main purpose, ...	238
--	-----

VIII.

CONCLUSION.

St John's Gospel—Its preciousness—Statement of—Corroborative testimony—Augustine—Others—Concurrence with these—Question of authorship—Keim's view—Unsatisfac- tory—Importance of a name—Assailants—Prejudices—Re- sults of modern criticism—Not formidable—Gospel impreg- nable—Its blessings abiding, ...	251
---	-----

*The following are some of the Authorities which have been
consulted in the preparation of this work :—*

- ALFORD Greek Testament.
BLEEK Introduction to New Testament.
CHAMBERS ...Encyclopædia (for biographical sketches).
DAVIDSON Introduction to New Testament.
GODET Commentary on St John's Gospel.
KITTO Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature.
LIGHTFOOT...Contemporary Review.
LUTHARDT ...St John the Author of the Fourth Gospel.
MEYER Commentary on St John.
ROBERTS Discussions on the Gospels.
SANDAY Authorship and Historical Character of the Fourth
Gospel.
WESTCOTT....Introduction to Gospels ; and on Canon.

THE GOSPEL OF ST JOHN.

INTRODUCTION.

ST JOHN'S Gospel has always occupied a chief place in Christian esteem. It has been regarded in all ages with special favour. On account of its spirituality, and for other reasons, it has been with many the most prized of all the Gospels. The testimonies to this effect are copious, and are expressed in unhesitating terms. It will serve our purpose, and sufficiently illustrate our statement, to give the following specimens of those eulogies which have been passed on our Gospel, and of those estimates which have been formed of its value. Origen, the father of Biblical criticism, pronounces it to be "the choice one of the Gospels." Chrysostom, the greatest preacher of his day, declares that it is "more elevating in its influence than all the harmonies of music." Jerome, the most learned of

the Latin Fathers, asserts that John "excels in the depths of divine mysteries." Adam, of St Victor, bears similar testimony. This writer, who died in the end of the twelfth century, wrote a Latin poem in praise of the Evangelists. In this poem he speaks eulogistically of each, but pronounces upon John the highest encomium. Of him he says—

"John, a form divinely bright,
Upward soars in purer light."

Luther holds that the fourth Gospel is to be preferred by far to the others. Calvin, in his eulogy, says, that while the others seek to describe Christ's body, John's Gospel reveals His soul. Ernesti admiringly characterises it as the "heart of Christ." Herder—seemingly at a loss for language adequately to express his appreciation—exclaims in rapture, "Written by the hand of an angel!" Lange describes it as "the diamond among the Gospels." Da Costa, of Amsterdam, in his 'Harmony,' compares it to a voice from heaven, and likens it to the language of a seer. Westcott speaks of it in laudatory phraseology, and concludes that St John wrote the Gospel of the world. There are other testimonies, equally appreciatory, which we might have added to these, but it is not necessary to enlarge our list of witnesses. Those we have adduced show with sufficient force and fullness how highly our Gospel has been valued, and with what esteem it is still regarded.

But there has not only been this unanimity with regard to the contents of John's Gospel; there has been the same unanimity also with regard to its authorship. Its authorship has been almost uniformly assigned to the Apostle John. From the earliest times it has been accepted as his with hardly a dissentient voice. Its Johannine origin can scarcely be said to have been disputed by any of the early sects. Subsequently it was universally accepted and appealed to as the work of John. Its authenticity was supposed to rest on an unassailable basis, and its claim to a place in the sacred canon as an apostolic production was believed to be beyond cavil or controversy.

Of late, however, the Johannine origin of our Gospel has been called in question, and has been sharply controverted. Its authenticity has been vigorously assailed, and a bold criticism has undertaken to disprove it. It is seriously asserted that the belief of centuries is a delusion, and that the fourth Gospel is not "according to John."

St John's Gospel, therefore, is now on its trial, and is recognised by Biblical critics as the battle-field of the New Testament. The controversy about its origin is the chief controversy of the day. Of all questions in the realm of Biblical criticism, it is prosecuted with the greatest zeal and ardour. It has for the time being, at least, put every other into the background, and has been allowed to take the precedence. The dispute as

to its authorship is being carried on with undiminished, if not with increasing, vigour. The interest felt in the subject is deep and widespread as ever, and there is as yet no sign of abatement. It is emphatically the Biblical inquiry or question of the day, and is undoubtedly one of primary importance. It has to do with the very foundations of our faith, and has a bearing upon interests which are lasting as eternity. If it could be shown that the fourth Gospel is a forgery—that it is not the work of the Apostle John—that it had its origin in subsequent and in sub-apostolic times,—the discovery would land us in perplexity and fill us with dismay. The other Gospels might still remain to us—the narrative they unfold might still be revered by us—but the removal of our Gospel from the sacred canon would be attended with the most unhappy results. To deny to our Gospel an apostolic authorship, and thus virtually to consign it to the region of romance, would be to withdraw from the armoury of truth one of its weightiest weapons, and would give a blow to the heart of Christendom from which it would not be possible to recover. In such a case our wail might well be that of Mary at the empty sepulchre: “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him” (John, xx. 13).

In entering upon the inquiry as to the origin and authorship of the fourth Gospel, it may be important to notice, at this stage,—and we shall do so as briefly as

possible,—those objections which have been urged against our acceptance of its apostolicity—those attacks by which its traditional authorship has been assailed—those attempts which have been made to shake our faith in its Johannine origin.

The first rejection of our Gospel, the earliest assaults upon its authenticity, date far back in the history of Christianity. They began about the end of the second century. These early rejecters are known in history as the Alogi—a name that was given to them by Epiphanius; and given to them, as the name implies, on account of their aversion to the Logos-doctrine of John's Gospel. The information that is handed down to us concerning this sect is somewhat misty, exceedingly scanty, and is mainly derived from the writings of Philastrius and Epiphanius. Philastrius, who was bishop of Brescia, in Lombardy, and who died 307 A.D., refers to them briefly, and speaks of them as those who denied that the Gospel and the Revelation were by John.¹ Epiphanius, who was bishop of Salamis, in Cyprus, and who died 403 A.D., enters more into detail, and informs us that they not only rejected the Johannine authorship of the Gospel and the Revelation, but ascribed them to Cerinthus the heretic. These accounts, of which the one is seemingly an expansion of the other, agree in the main, and lead us to con-

¹ Qui Evangelium secundum Joannem et Apocalypsin ipsius non accipiunt.

clude that the objections of the Alogi were of a negative character. They were founded not on any historical basis, but on reasons drawn from the contents—in other words, not on external but on internal considerations. These grounds were, as far as we can learn, the inconsistencies or contradictions this party supposed to exist between the fourth Gospel and the Synoptic¹ narratives. It is also probable that the opposition of the Alogi, who were Monarchians, arose partly from, or at least was intensified by, their aversion to the Montanists, who were Trinitarians, and whose tenets, in their opinion, derived their support, if they did not find their source, in John's Gospel. The Alogi, however, were neither a numerous nor an influential sect. Their peculiar views were received with little sympathy, and made little impression beyond their own circle. Epiphanius informs us that they were an insignificant sect, and likens them to vermin whose poison has little strength.² And accordingly we find that, in the lapse of a few years, their name as that of a living sect disappeared altogether from the page of history. There is reason to think that the attacks of the Alogi were not allowed to pass without resistance and reply. Hippolytus, who, according to the inscription on his statue which was discovered at

¹ The name given to the first three Gospels, on account of the parallelism or substantial similarity of their contents.

² Ὀλίγον μὲν τῇ δυνάμει.

Rome in 1561, wrote a book entitled 'On the Gospel and the Revelation of John,'¹ appears in that work to have had special reference to the Alogi, and to have written with the chief purpose of refuting their objections.

Subsequent to the time of the Alogi, and for many centuries afterwards, the Johannine origin of our Gospel was never questioned, and no doubt was ever felt or expressed as to its genuineness. It was received as an apostolic work with the most unbroken and unvarying unanimity. Its canonicity was as undoubted as that of the other Gospels. It was held—to say the least—in as high esteem. On all points its authority was recognised to be as infallible as theirs. In the Eastern and Western Churches, among believers and pagans—among all sects, whether orthodox or heretical—its voice was acknowledged to be that of the "beloved disciple." Eusebius believed in it; Jerome quoted from it; Clement of Alexandria appealed to it. Gnostics of every shade of opinion, Montanists wherever found, friends of Christianity and foes alike, referred to it as the work of him to whom an almost unvarying tradition has assigned it. In short, with the exception of the Alogi, John's authorship of the fourth Gospel was universally acquiesced in; and it was as firmly believed that the fourth Gospel was the work of the Apostle John, as that the first Gospel was the work of the Apostle Matthew.

¹ Ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννου Εὐαγγελίου καὶ Ἀποκάλυψεως.

But in the end of last century "enemies once again rose up against it." Its authenticity, which for ages had been unchallenged, became anew the subject of controversy. Its apostolic origin was once more assailed, and attempts were made to assign to it another or a later authorship. Evanson,¹ in England, in 1792, ascribes its authorship to a Platonist. Eckerman,² in Germany, in 1796, whilst allowing that the Gospel is based on certain paragraphs from John's own hand, assigns its authorship to one of John's friends. Vogel, in his 'Last Judgment,' in 1801, asserts that it is the work of a Petrine Jewish Christian. Ballenstedt,³ in 1812,—on account of the contradictions between it and the first three Gospels, and for other reasons,—controverts its authenticity. These were its chief assailants in the end of the last and at the beginning of the present century. Their objections were based mainly on the alleged difference in its style from that of the Apocalypse, and also, as we have said, on the alleged discrepancies between its contents and those of the other Gospels. The attacks of these critics were vigorously replied to and successfully repulsed. In England, the chief defenders of the traditional belief were Priestley⁴ and Simpson;⁵ and in Germany, Storr and Süskind.⁶ The

¹ The Dissonance of the Four generally received Evangelists, &c.

² Theologische Beiträge.

³ Philo und Johannes, &c.

⁴ Letters to a Young Man : 1793.

⁵ An Essay on the Authenticity of the New Testament : 1793.

⁶ In Hatt's Magazine, 1796 and 1800.

result was that the fourth Gospel suffered nothing in general estimation either from the shallow criticism of Evanson, the frivolous objections of Vogel, or the more profound arguments of Ballenstedt. Not only so, but their objections were replied to with such force and success, that some of those who had entered the lists in opposition to John's Gospel acknowledged their mistake, and retracted their doubts. The controversy, which, while it lasted, had been carried on with considerable vehemence, was now seemingly at an end. The sword had been returned to its sheath, and to all appearance there was a suspension, if not a termination, of hostilities. The warfare was apparently over, and the combatants had retired from the battle-field. It was, however, only the calm that precedes the storm—the brightness that is followed by the thunder-cloud—as again, in 1820, the controversy was kindled anew, and ever since has been carried on with intenser vigour. The cloud which, in the time of Evanson and Eckerman, was no bigger than a man's hand, has swelled into alarming proportions; and now in our times the fourth Gospel is, as we have said, the battle-field on which criticism carries on its keenest and sharpest warfare. Bretschneider, the head of this new crusade, controverted the Gospel's authenticity, and contested it on external and especially on internal considerations. He argued that the Christ of John's Gospel is not the Christ of the Synoptists, and that the discourses

ascribed to Christ in the fourth Gospel were neither genuine nor possible. He placed no reliance on the external witnesses, and maintained that their testimony was too remote—too distant from John's time—to be of any value. He held that the author of the Gospel was not an eyewitness of what he relates, nor even a Jew by birth, but was a Gentile Christian who lived early in the second century. For these and other reasons, Bretschneider concluded that the fourth Gospel was not the work of John, was of no historical value, and was written chiefly to remove the scruples of certain Jewish objectors. Bretschneider's work excited much controversy, and was replied to with much ability and success. He therefore declared that his objections were fully met, and that his purpose—which he said was to bring the question into fuller prominence, and to obtain for the orthodox view a more complete defence—was fully served. The sincerity of this confession, however, may be questioned; and at any rate it seems neither wise nor safe to advocate the cause of error in order to elicit confirmation of the truth. Be this as it may, Bretschneider was seemingly satisfied, and after his retraction the authorship of the fourth Gospel was again universally ascribed to John. In some quarters it even began to be studied with special appreciation, and notably by the school of Schleiermacher. This writer imagined he found in its contents a spirituality which more fully satisfied his Christian consciousness than

anything to be met with in the Synoptic pages. If the school of Schleiermacher, and Schleiermacher himself, are deserving of blame, or erred in any way, it is not so much perhaps on account of their excessive appreciation of the fourth Gospel, as on account of their being so influenced by this preference as to seek the discredit of the first three Gospels.

But though these attacks of Bretschneider were fully repelled, the controversy which he had aroused was not long suffered to sleep. Other critics followed, whose antipathy or antagonism was more pronounced; and at length, in the year 1835, Strauss startled Europe by the strangeness and boldness of his speculations. In that year he published his first 'Leben Jesu' (Life of Jesus), in which the position he took up was so advanced, and the views he advocated were so extreme, that for a while the religious world was not only shocked, but thrown into frenzy. His opposition, however, was chiefly a negative one, and amounted to little more than a rejection of the apostolic authorship of our Gospel. His main contention was, that the belief of centuries was a delusion, and that the fourth Gospel was not according to John.

As the outcome of this negative criticism, however, there arose a new school with a positive hypothesis. This school—known as the Tübingen school—was not content with the negative criticism of Strauss and his predecessors, but advocated views of a more advanced

and definite character. The founders of this school—Baur, Schwegler, Zeller, and others—not only rejected the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel, but held that its origin could not be dated earlier than the middle of the second century. They argued that its contents indicate a period considerably subsequent to the age of the apostles, and that it was ascribed to John that it might bear the name, and thus possess the influence, of that honoured apostle.

These, then, are the attacks which have been made upon our Gospel—the objections which have been urged against its authenticity; and speaking with special reference to the adverse criticisms of modern sceptics, they may be embraced under these three classifications: 1. Those which were urged by Evanson, and afterwards espoused by Eckerman. Their objections were of a vague and flimsy character, and were replied to with such success by Priestley, Simpson, and others, that they were forced either into silence or to withdraw their objections. 2. Those which were urged by Bretschneider. These were more direct and definite, and occasioned sharper and wider controversy. They were, however, so thoroughly combated by Calmberg, Crome, and others, that Bretschneider professed to be satisfied, and to retract the objections which he had expressed. 3. Those which were advocated by Strauss, Baur, and others. These were far in advance of previous objections, and, if well founded, would discredit any

testimony that might be produced in favour of the Johanneine authorship of our Gospel. The aim of these later critics is to discredit both the external and internal evidence in support of John's Gospel, and to show from internal considerations that it could not have been the work of the beloved disciple.

The summary we have thus given is necessarily brief, but it is, we think, sufficiently plain and intelligible. It would have been easy to give a fuller and more enlarged account, but enough has been said to indicate the general character and method of those attacks to which our Gospel has been subjected. There may be modifications of these which we have not detailed or defined, but it is sufficient to say that the main purpose they all have in view is to overthrow our faith in John's Gospel as a historic and apostolic document. Their chief aim, by their own confession, is to drive us from our old moorings—to remove our old landmarks—to upset our old beliefs,—in short, to force upon us the belief that the fourth Gospel is not according to John, but a literary forgery of post-apostolic times.

The work or task we have assigned to ourselves is to examine the assertions and arguments of our Gospel's assailants, and to show that they are not sufficiently supported to justify their conclusions. It is to point out and prove that, for the most part, they are groundless; that in those cases where they apparently have some foundation, a fuller investigation of the subject,

and a clearer understanding of it, have minimised if not removed the difficulties, and shown that the objections founded upon them are shallow and shadowy; and that, upon the whole, there is nothing in the objections which have been urged to shake our faith in, or warrant our rejection of, the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel.

It may be proper, and it may be profitable to some of our readers, to give in this place a brief biography of a few of those objectors to our Gospel whose names are prominent in the controversy, and in whose writings we find the chief armoury of arguments by which its authenticity is assailed. In doing so, we shall confine ourselves to those Continental writers whose names we have already had occasion to mention, or whose views we shall have occasion to deal with in the subsequent pages.

Bretschneider, whose book on John's Gospel in 1820 reawakened, as we have said, the Johannine controversy, was born at Gersdorf, in Saxony, in 1776. Of his early life there is but scanty information, but it appears that his habits were to a considerable extent of a studious nature. After he had completed his elementary education, he devoted himself with commendable diligence, first at Leipsic and afterwards at Wittenberg, to theological pursuits. In 1806 he accepted of the pastorate of Schneeberg, in which he laboured for about two years, and which office he filled till his appointment

as superintendent in Annaberg. In 1816 he was made general superintendent at Gotha; and finally, in 1840, he was raised to the high dignity of Councillor of the Upper Consistory there—an honour that he held till his death, which took place in 1848. Bretschneider is a prolific and popular author, and in his numerous and able productions there are few subjects within the range of sacred science which he fails to handle with force and ability. Though he is not to be ranked with the most eminent of German divines, it is not to be denied that by his studious diligence and scholarly attainments he has won for himself considerable celebrity among his countrymen. The work with which we are chiefly concerned was published, as we have said, in 1820, and is entitled '*Probabilia de Evangelii et Epistolarum Joannis Apostoli Indole et Origine.*' In this work Bretschneider argues against our Gospel both on internal and external grounds, and maintains that the author was not an eye-witness, and therefore not the Apostle John, but probably a Christian presbyter who assumed the apostle's name, and lived in Egypt in the early part of the second century. The views he advocates in this work occasioned considerable controversy, both in his own country and elsewhere, and drew forth a number of replies, of which the most important are those of Calmberg in 1822, of Hensen in 1823, and of Crome in 1824. These replies were so exhaustive, and so fully established the orthodox position, that Bretschneider professed to be

satisfied by their arguments, and to abandon his scepticism. His views, therefore, met with little acceptance, and the reasoning with which he supported them did not secure much favour. On the whole, it is not easy to decide what Bretschneider's real opinions were, or to what school of theology he may be said to have belonged; but we will not be accounted either unjust or ungenerous if we indicate an opinion, that notwithstanding of his retractation, his theological sentiments and sympathies were more in agreement with than in opposition to those of the rationalistic party.

Strauss, whom we shall next mention, was born at Ludwigsburg, in Würtemberg, in 1808. He received his early education in his native town, and subsequently studied in the theological seminaries of Blaubeuren and Tübingen. At the age of twenty-two he undertook the duties of a country pastor, but shortly afterwards resigned his office, and in 1831 removed to Berlin, where he studied diligently and with admiration Hegel's philosophy and Schleiermacher's theology. The death of Hegel had taken place shortly before this; but his philosophy—to which Strauss warmly devoted himself—was in the zenith of its popularity. In 1832, in his twenty-fourth year, he returned to Tübingen, and in the university there delivered with great *éclat* philosophical lectures on the Hegelian basis. Up to this period his popularity was confined within a limited circle, and his reputation was little known beyond the range of his

immediate acquaintance and intimate friends. But in 1835, at the age of twenty-seven, his 'Life of Jesus,' which he then published, won for him an almost universal distinction. His name was thus brought prominently before the public, and the views advocated in that work produced a sensation in the German theological world which has rarely been equalled. The publicity which Strauss attained cannot, however, be wholly ascribed to his writings, but is to be accounted for, partly at least, by the fact that on account of his theological opinions he was subjected to legal proceedings. At the time of the publication of his 'Life of Jesus,' he held theological and philosophical appointments in the University of Tübingen; and on account of the advanced views expressed in his work, the superintendents of public instruction called upon him to reconcile these opinions with his position as a teacher of Christian truth. His efforts at explanation were not satisfactory to his judges, and in consequence he was removed from his office. The result was, that he was regarded by many as a sort of martyr to the cause of free inquiry, and the sympathy awakened on his behalf was deep and widespread. In 1839, in spite of much opposition, and in the face of loud protestation, he was appointed to the Professorship of Dogmatics and Church History in the University of Zurich, in Switzerland. The people of the canton, however, whose indignation at the outrage thus offered to their religious feelings could

not be controlled, rose with one unanimous voice and compelled him to resign his office, and to withdraw from the country. The excitement and controversy attending these transactions drew on him necessarily universal attention, and rendered him famous throughout Europe. In this book, which has been followed by such unfortunate results to its author, Strauss attempted, by arguments drawn from internal criticism, to disprove the authenticity of all the Gospels, and consequently of the fourth Gospel, with which we have chiefly to do, and to show from their apparent contradictions and improbabilities that the Gospel history is no better than a bundle of myths. Though by this book Strauss won considerable reputation, it may be safely affirmed that his influence as a theological writer is greatly on the wane; and in the contest which has been going on between him and his opponents, there can be no doubt that the victory has been, and still is, more on their side than on his.

Baur, the acknowledged head of the Tübingen school, was born in 1792. In 1817 he was appointed to a professorship in the seminary of Blaubeuren, where he made his first appearance as an author about 1824. The title of his book was 'Symbolism and Mythology, or the Nature-Religion of the Ancients,' and it shows unmistakably the writer's bias in the direction of the school of Schleiermacher. The work was favourably received, and gave good evidence that the writer pos-

— sessed no ordinary abilities. In 1826 he accepted of a chair in the theological faculty of Tübingen, and in that position he devoted himself assiduously and successfully to the study of theological subjects. The celebrity he has established for himself, great as it is, is not exclusively the outcome of his own talents and scholarship, but has partly grown out of the fact that he is the acknowledged head of that modern school of sceptical criticism which has done so much to revolutionise thought and direct inquiry in the religious world. In 1836 he published another work which was a reply to the 'Symbolek' of Möhler, who was at that time a professor in the Catholic seminary at Tübingen. In this work Baur advocates views which are farther removed from the standpoint of the Reformed faith than those of his Catholic controversialist, and recommends a system of Christian doctrine in which primitive Christianity is represented in an entirely new form. On the appearance of the famous 'Life of Jesus,' by his scholar, Strauss, who converted the Christianity of the Gospel into a mythical history, he felt disposed, if not to retrace his steps, yet to exercise caution; but shortly his hesitancy left him, and he went on in his work of reconstruction with as fearless a hand as ever. He attacked the genuineness of one canonical book after another, till he at length so revolutionised and remodelled the Gospel history, as to give it the appearance of a new Gospel. In

his work on St Paul, and in that of his scholar Schweigler, we have a full account of this system of reconstruction. According to this system, it is held that Christianity was originally nothing more than an improved Judaism; that the apostles, with the exception of Paul, were Ebionites; that none of the New Testament books are genuine, with the exception of the Epistles of Paul to the Romans, the Corinthians, and the Galatians; that the others were the productions of pious forgers of a later age, who reconciled the two opposing systems of Ebionite Petrinism and Gnostic Paulinism, and that from these sprang towards the end of the second century the Christianity of the Church. It is manifest from all this that Baur's system is nothing better than a religious romance, and has neither fact nor foundation to rest on. His theory about the fourth Gospel is that it was written, not as a historical but as a doctrinal work; that its object was to uphold the true doctrine in opposition to the erroneous and conflicting opinions which, during the second century, agitated the Church; and that, therefore, it was written not by an apostle but in post-apostolic times.

Renan, with whom we shall conclude our list, was born at Tregnier, in France, in 1823. His early educational training was committed to the priests of his native town. He was sent to Paris that he might attend the seminary of Abbé Dupanloup, and under his care might prepare himself for the office of the ministry.

Subsequently, when he was twenty years of age, he went to Issy, and afterwards to St Sulpice, where his views underwent such a change as led him to the conviction that the Church was not the sphere to which he could any longer devote himself. He therefore accepted the appointment of a *répétiteur* in a school, and entered upon a career of academical study. He has published several works on important subjects, and among others, translations of Canticles and the Book of Job, with introductions and commentaries.¹ In 1860 he was invited by the Emperor Napoléon III. to undertake a tour of exploration in Syria and Phœnicia, and on his return was elected to the chair of Hebrew at the College de France. His tenure of office, however, was brief, as in consequence of his outspokenness on theological points, in an address which he delivered at his installation, he was first suspended and afterwards removed from his professorship. His great work, which occasioned a most profound sensation in the religious world, and which was issued from the Paris press in 1863, is entitled 'La Vie de Jésus,' and forms part of his 'Origines du Christianisme.' In that work the writer seems to vacillate between the affirmative and the negative side of the question as to the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel. There are, according to him, very strong arguments both for and against it; but on the whole, and chiefly from the internal evidence,

¹ 'Le Cantique des Cantiques,' 1860; 'Le Livre de Job,' 1859.

he comes to an adverse conclusion. "If everything must be said," says M. Renan, "we shall add that probably John himself had little part in this composition."

There are other critics eminent as controversialists in the Johannine question besides these whose biography we have thus briefly given, who have either denied or questioned the genuineness of our Gospel; but as in the following pages we will have occasion to refer to them and their opinions, it seems unnecessary to extend further our preliminary or introductory remarks.

I.

THE LIFE OF JOHN.

To write a defence of John's Gospel, and yet to give no account of John's life, would be wellnigh unpardonable. The treatise that overlooked this, however excellent in other respects, would be manifestly lacking in fulness and interest. There would be a want of character and completeness about it which would obviously detract from its value. The materials for a memoir are both ample and accessible, and we shall endeavour to present these in as condensed yet in as complete a form as possible.

John, as all the accounts we have of him testify, was a native of Galilee, the northern province of Palestine. The region of his nativity was exceedingly rich and picturesque, and possessed some of the loveliest landscapes to be met with in the Holy Land. It embraced the great plain of Esdraelon in the south, and stretched to the mountain-range of Lebanon in the north, and was enriched with a diversity of scenery of surpassing beauty. Though this region is now emphatically the

home of solitude and silence, it was in the days of the Israelites and in the times of the apostles the scene of crowded life and busy activity. It contained, according to Josephus, some two hundred and forty towns or villages, which thickly studded the whole face of the country.¹ The inhabitants, according to the same authority, were industrious and warlike, and were trained from their infancy to engage in manly and martial pursuits. Living as they did at a distance from the ecclesiastical metropolis of the country, they were comparatively unrestrained by the pressure of priestly influences, and were more at liberty to follow the dictates of their religious conscience.² The character of the country in which they dwelt, with its forest glades and romantic glens, with its rocky ridges and fruitful vales, was calculated to stimulate their religious nature, to foster their religious impulses, and to point them from nature up to nature's God. It was of all places in Palestine the most meet to be the cradle of the world's religion, and the starting-place in the career of Him whose mission was to be a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel. It was in this region, accordingly, that Christ commenced His public Messianic ministry, and made His first public appeal on the side of truth and righteousness. It was to this region, too, that all His apostles, with the exception of Judas Iscariot,

¹ Life, p. 45: Wars of the Jews, iii. 2, 3.

² Stanley—Sinai and Palestine, pp. 364, 376.

seemingly belonged ; and it was here also that He laid the foundation of that Church which was destined to embrace in its mercies nations of every name and people of every clime.¹

The name of John's father was Zebedee, and of his mother Salome (Matt. xxvii. 56; Mark, xv. 40). Zebedee was a fisherman by occupation, and seems to have carried on an extensive and a lucrative trade. The evidence of this is to be found in the fact that, in the management of his boats and the mending of his nets, he was assisted not only by his two sons, but also by his hired servants (Mark, i. 20). Inferentially, therefore, we are justified in concluding that he had prospered in his operations, and was—more through industry, perhaps, than by inheritance—in comfortable circumstances. The same thing may be inferred from what we know of Salome. She was one of the women who accompanied Jesus in His journeyings, ministered to Him of their substance, and after His crucifixion purchased sweet spices to anoint His body (Luke, viii. 3; Matt. xxvii. 55, 56; Luke, xxiii. 55). It seems, too (John, xix. 27), that John was the owner of a house in Jerusalem, and that he enjoyed the acquaintance, and probably the friendship, of the high priest Caiaphas. It is fair, therefore, to conclude that John's parents were in prosperous circumstances, and occupied a respectable position in social life.

¹ Macdonald—*Life and Writings of St John*, pp. 18, 19.

John's birthplace was probably Bethsaida, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee. It was also the birthplace of Peter, Andrew, and Philip; and we may gather from several passages of Scripture (Matt. iv. 18-21; John, i. 37-44) that there had existed between these young men an early and intimate friendship. Capernaum, known in the Gospels as Christ's own city, was also situated on the shores of the Galilean lake; and it is stated by tourists and travellers that at some little distance from Capernaum there is a beautiful bay, whose broad margin of pearly sand gives it an imposing appearance. It was in this creek or corner that Bethsaida is supposed to have stood;¹ and here was born and grew up that young man whose writings were destined to gladden the world, and whose name was to be known and honoured through all ages as the disciple whom Jesus loved. There is nothing unlawful or unlikely in supposing that on the pearly margin of Bethsaida's beautiful bay, where John's early life was passed, he would often engage in boyish sports and pastimes, and would often strive with his youthful companions to gain the mastery in the games. Often, too, he would fit up his miniature fishing-boats, and sail them across the placid pools which abounded on the margin of Galilee's sea. In this way and in these sports he would often meet with those who, like himself, were to be the future leaders of the Gospel Church,

¹ The Land and the Book, p. 360.

and would form that friendship with them which, as time wore on, deepened into an undying attachment. It is to be regretted that there is no authentic account of John's early life, or of his educational training; but there is no doubt, from what we know of his parents, and especially of the ardent and active piety of Salome, that his education would not be neglected. There is little doubt that they would be careful to instruct him in the knowledge of his country's annals, and would relate to him with pride and pleasure those historical incidents which had made their nation famous. They would also instruct him in those Messianic hopes which their prophetic writings inspired, and which all Jews rested on and looked to as their special boast and glory. The Jews had a pride in instilling into their children a knowledge of the principles of religion; and John's parents would not be behind in this respect. It is no rash assertion to say that they attended with scrupulous care to the religious education of their children, and that it was as true of John as it afterwards was of Timothy, that from a child he knew the Scriptures.¹ It was required by what we may call the education act of Judea that there should be a school and a teacher for every twenty-five children, and that at the age of six, when the home education was supposed to be completed, they should be sent to the local school for the purpose of receiving an elementary education.²

¹ 2 Tim. iii. 15.

² Kitto's Cyclopædia, "Education."

There can be no doubt that at the required age John would be enrolled as a scholar in the village school, and that he might have been seen in his little class-room as earnest and anxious there as in the playground to carry off the palm. It is said that in addition to these synagogue schools there were academies or higher schools, which were established in many parts of Judea; and we may believe that as John's parents were possessed of considerable worldly property, he would be sent to finish his education at one of those higher seminaries. It is well known, too, that it was a Jewish custom, founded on Jewish law, for the males to commence their periodical pilgrimages to Jerusalem—to celebrate the national feasts there—at twelve or thirteen years of age;¹ and, in keeping with this custom, John, at that early age, would doubtless visit the holy city, and make his acquaintance with the temple, with its sacred associations and with its splendid services. In John's time the fame of Gamaliel, the most celebrated teacher of his day, was at its height, and was attracting to Jerusalem young men from all countries where the Jews resided. Among others, it had drawn to the Jewish metropolis one young man,² who, though not born on Jewish ground, was yet a child of Jewish parents—a Hebrew of the Hebrews; and it is no extravagant supposition to imagine that these two young men, the one destined to be specially distinguished in

¹ Deut. xvi. 11, 14, 16; Luke, ii. 42.

² Acts, xxii. 3.

the future as the apostle whom Jesus loved, and the other as the apostle of the Gentiles, met for the first time in the temple service on the occasion of the annual celebration of their national feasts. The impressions then made upon them, in all likelihood, were never effaced; and traces of these may be found in the striking and liturgical imagery which we have in the Apocalypse of the one, and in the type-explaining phraseology which we have in the Epistle to the Hebrews of the other.¹

Like his brother James, John followed the occupation of his father, and for several years was engaged as a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee. There is reason to believe that in early life he was brought under the sway of religious influences; and there is little doubt that, under the parental roof and on the Galilean lake, his religious feelings were fostered and intensified. His mother Salome was undoubtedly a woman of active and ardent piety; and from Matt. xx. 20, it is evident that she was living under the influence of Messianic hopes. To her pious exertions, therefore, John was deeply indebted for his religious upbringing; and one can readily imagine that on the billowy bosom of the Galilean sea, whether during the sunny hours of the day or the silent watches of the night, the lessons which had been enforced upon him by a mother's lips, and endeared to him by a mother's life, would be impressed

¹ Macdonald—Life and Writings of St John, p. 26.

upon him still more deeply and intensely. And so it was that when John the Baptist—"the voice in the wilderness"—appeared and announced his mission, John was one of the first to join his ministry. How long he remained with the Baptist it is not easy to determine; but as soon as Jesus was pointed out to him as the "Lamb of God," he forsook the Baptist and followed Christ. On the occasion of his first interview with Jesus, he seems to have spent some time in His company (John, i. 39); but it was not at this interview that he received his call to become "a fisher of men." For some time afterwards he was employed in his former occupation; and yet we cannot doubt that the words he had listened to in that first interview would impress him with the conviction that He in whose presence he stood was no other than that Jesus to whom all Jewish hearts were looking as "the Consolation of Israel."

Some time subsequent to this interview, though probably not long, John received his final and formal call to follow Jesus. On that occasion he and James his brother were on the lake at their usual employment; and no sooner did they hear the invitation, "Follow me," than they instantly obeyed. At once and without hesitation they forsook their nets, left their father, and followed Him who had thus honoured them by calling them to be His disciples (Matt. iv. 21, 22). From the time of his call, and all through our Lord's ministry,

John was one of the most attached of His followers. It is evident from Matt. xvii. 1, xxvi. 37; Mark, v. 37, that he was one of those three apostles who enjoyed most of Christ's confidence, and on whom Christ conferred special honour. Along with Peter and James—the other specially honoured apostles—he was present at the raising of Jairus's daughter, on the Mount of Transfiguration, and in the Garden of Gethsemane. At the Last Supper he leaned on his Saviour's bosom (John, xiii. 24). When Jesus was betrayed, John, like the other disciples, showed some fear and hesitancy; but soon his fears passed away, and from that time onward his devotion was deep and faithful. One of the first to visit the empty sepulchre, he followed Jesus with unfailing constancy till the final separation on Olivet. After our Lord's ascension, John is frequently mentioned in the sacred narrative. In company with Peter, we find him with the impotent man in the temple (Acts, iii.); and on being summoned before the Sanhedrim, they marvelled at his "boldness" (Acts, iv.) Subsequently, and again in company with Peter, he visited the churches in Samaria, and "preached the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans" (Acts, viii. 14-25). After their return to Jerusalem, John resided for some time in the Jewish capital; and if we compare Gal. ii. 9 with Acts, xv., it will appear that he was an influential member of the Apostolic Council which was held there. Paul speaks of

him in honourable terms, and informs us that he, Peter, and James, were "pillars" in the early Church.¹ How long John remained in Jerusalem after the meeting of the Council (Acts, xv.), of which James was the president, we have no means of ascertaining with accuracy. He is not mentioned in Acts, xxi. 17, when Paul paid his last visit to Jerusalem, though perhaps it is a hasty inference to affirm from this silence that he was not at that time in the Jewish metropolis. The probability is that he did not leave Jerusalem till after the death of Mary the mother of Jesus, which, according to Eusebius, took place 48 A.D., or before he was constrained to do so by "the wars and rumours of wars" that preceded and attended the Roman invasion of Palestine.

It is generally believed that John spent the closing years of his life in Asia Minor. Lützelberger, it is true, in a work which he published at Leipsic in 1840, is of a different opinion, and argues that the tradition of his Ephesian residence has no historic basis. It is indeed a matter of surprise that Ignatius, in his Epistle to the Ephesians, mentions Paul, but not John. But the non-mention of a fact is no proof against it, and in this case the evidence we have of John's residence in Ephesus is complete and conclusive. The witnesses who testify to this residence are chiefly Polycrates and Irenæus. The former, who was bishop of Ephesus about the end of the second century, says, in a letter

¹ Gal. ii. 9—Οἱ δοκοῦντες στῦλοι εἶναι.

to Victor, bishop of Rome, that John was buried at Ephesus.¹ Irenæus, who was bishop of Lyons about the same time, and a disciple of Polycarp, bishop of Ephesus, who was a disciple of John, says that John resided at Ephesus in the reign of Trajan (A.D. 98-117),² and published his Gospel whilst he dwelt there. The testimony of these two witnesses is confirmed by that of Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and others. It is not known, nor, so far as we are aware, is there any evidence to show, at what date John began to reside in Asia Minor; but as the Asiatic Churches were founded by Paul, and as in none of his Epistles to these Churches does he make any mention of John, we cannot be far wrong in concluding that his residence in Asia began after the death of Paul, or not before 64 A.D.

There are only fragmentary and imperfect accounts of John's life and labours in Ephesus. From the information we have, however, we learn that his authority and character were held in high repute. Polycrates not only reckons him among the great elements of the Church, but speaks of him as wearing the badge of priesthood.³

¹ Euseb. H. E. v. 24—'Εν 'Εφέσῳ κεκοίμηται.

² Iren., Ad. Hær. ii. 39; iii. 1.

³ Euseb., H. E. iii. 31—Μεγάλα στοιχεῖα . . . ἱερεὺς τὸ πέταλον πεφορεκώς. Τὸ πέταλον was the gold plate worn on the forehead of the high priest. The expression signifies probably rather spiritual or ecclesiastical pre-eminence than any relationship to the priesthood.

The tradition which has come down to us of his banishment to Patmos, and which is not wholly, though it may be largely, based on Rev. i. 9, is variously given by the Fathers. There is much difference in their statements regarding both the date and duration of his exile, as well as regarding the emperor by whom he was banished. There is, however, no lack of evidence to establish the fact of his banishment, and to show that, irrespective or independent of Rev. i. 9, the belief in his Patmos exile was very generally entertained. The following evidence is sufficiently confirmatory and conclusive on this point.

In the first place, Clement of Alexandria tells us that there was a report in circulation, which was true, and which had been handed down by tradition, to the effect that the Apostle John returned from Patmos to Ephesus after the death of the tyrant.¹ He then proceeds to relate the well-known account of the conversion of a young man who had renounced his religion and joined a band of brigands, and speaks of this as a story or anecdote. It will be observed that what Clement speaks of as a story or anecdote, does not refer to the time of John's return from Patmos to Ephesus, but only to the statement that the robber, through John's persuasion, had abandoned his lawless

¹ Clemens Alex., Quis Dives, cap. 42 : Ἀκουσον μῦθον οὐ μῦθον, ἀλλὰ ὄντα λόγον περὶ Ἰωάννου τοῦ ἀποστόλου παραδεδομένον καὶ μνήμη πεφυλαγμένον· ἐπειδὴ ὅαυ τοῦ τυράννου τελευτήσαντος ἀπὸ τῆς Πάτμου τῆς νήσου μετῆλθεν [Ἰωάννης] ἐπὶ τὴν Ἐφεσον, ἀπῆει κ.τ.λ.

courses, and renewed his Christian allëgiance. The fact of John's exile and of his return is spoken of by Clement not as a thing to be proved, but as a thing that was widely known and generally believed. The way in which he speaks of the tyrant assumes that it was not necessary to mention him by name, and that those to whom he was writing would have no difficulty in understanding who was meant. It is obvious, too, that Clement's account of John's banishment was not founded upon Rev. i. 9, but on a widespread, well-known, and generally accepted tradition. It appears, therefore, that those to whom Clement was writing knew of John's banishment to Patmos, and of his subsequent release and return to Ephesus.

The language of Origen is no less conclusive. In his Commentary on Matthew, he says that the king of the Romans, according to tradition, condemned John, for bearing witness to the truth, to the isle of Patmos.¹ It is important to notice that the word which he employs to signify tradition is used by the Fathers in a limited sense, and is applied exclusively to oral tradition in contradistinction to what had been committed to writing. It appears, therefore, from the language of Origen, that he founded his statement of John's exile in Patmos upon a tradition which was

¹ Origen Comm. in Matt. opp. iii. p. 720: 'Ο δὲ Ρωμαίων βασιλεὺς, ὡς ἡ παράδοσις διδάσκει, κατεδίκασε τὸν Ἰωάννην μαρτυροῦντα διὰ τὸν τῆς ἀληθείας λόγον, εἰς Πάτμον τὴν νῆσον κ.τ.λ.

generally current, and of whose truth he himself seems to have had no doubt, and not upon Rev. i. 9, to which he subsequently refers, or on any conjectural inference therefrom.

Tertullian also speaks of the same subject in terms equally clear and convincing, and tells us that after the apostle had been immersed in boiling oil, from which he escaped without harm, he was banished to an island.¹ Tertullian therefore had no doubt of the truth of John's Patmos exile, and his language is capable of no other interpretation. The story of John's immersion in boiling oil, which has been transmitted by Tertullian, has indeed been called in question. It has been declared to belong to the region of myths, and it has been inferred that his account of John's banishment is equally mythical. But even allowing that the account of his being immersed in boiling oil is open to question, it by no means follows that the account of his banishment, which is confirmed from other sources, should be placed in the same category. On the whole, it seems to us that there is no reason to doubt the testimony of Tertullian in proof of John's banishment to Patmos.

There are other testimonies of a similar character, but it is unnecessary to quote these, or enlarge upon them. It seems sufficiently proved by these statements that

¹ Tertull., *Præser. Hær.*, cap. 36: *Felix ecclesia . . . ubi apostolus Joannes, posteaquam in oleum igneum demersus nihil passus est, in insulam religatur, &c.*

John was banished to Patmos, though in what year, or by what emperor, it may not be possible to decide. There are some, however, as we have said, who look upon the tradition of his exile as a myth, and Meyer says that it is "manifestly false." It appears to us, on the other hand, that there is no reason for rejecting a tradition which was so widely circulated and generally credited; and, from what we know of the times in which John lived, and of the character of Domitian in whose reign the banishment is generally believed to have occurred, we are disposed to adhere to the credibility of the tradition.

The legendary history of St John is alike copious and curious; and though in some instances the legend or tradition may be traced to the inventive faculty of the apostle's admirers, in other instances it bears no less evidently the impress of probability, or rather, we should say, the stamp of truth. The more important of these legends or traditions, to some of which we have already had occasion to refer, we shall now place before our readers, leaving them to accept or reject them according to their pleasure. One tradition is that which narrates the meeting of John with Cerinthus the heretic in one of the public baths at Ephesus, and of his abrupt and sudden flight from what he believed to be, in consequence of that heretic's presence, the scene of danger. This anecdote rests upon the authority of Irenæus, who says, "People are still living who have heard Polycarp

relate that John having entered a bath-house at Ephesus, and having seen Cerinthus inside, went away abruptly without having taken a bath saying, "Let us get out in case the house falls down, since it contains Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth."¹ This tradition, which is sufficiently supported to give it credence, thoroughly harmonises with the character of him who in earlier days objected to one having the power to heal who was not a recognised associate of the apostles, and who at a subsequent date would have destroyed with fire the Samaritan village which was inhospitable or unfriendly to his Master. Another tradition is one which we have already noticed, and which is narrated by Clement of Alexandria with reference to the history of a young robber.² According to this tradition, the apostle, on his return from Patmos, employed himself in visiting the surrounding countries and in establishing Churches; and one day, in a town near Ephesus, he saw a sprightly and handsome young man to whom he felt himself strongly attracted. Afterwards he intrusted him to one of the bishops of the place, who promised to watch over him, and to instruct him till he could be admitted to baptism. The bishop for a while was faithful to his promise, but afterwards relaxed his vigilance; and the young man, too much left to himself, fell away from his Christian obligations, and joining

¹ Iren., Adv. Hær., iii. 4.

² Clem. Alex., Quis Dives, c. 42.

himself to a band of brigands, of whom he became the chief, plunged into almost every excess. After some time John revisited the same town, and having been informed by the bishop of the young man's declension and lawless life, was filled with grief and sorrow. He immediately obtained a horse and a guide and hurried off to the haunts of the fierce and lawless robbers. On reaching the neighbourhood of their encampment he was seized by the sentinels, who carried him, not an unwilling victim, to the tent of their chief. As soon, however, as the robber recognised the captive, and knew him to be his old friend the Apostle John, he, fully armed as he was, fled from his presence; but the apostle, notwithstanding his great age, ran after him, and with earnest entreaties prevailed upon him to stop. The youth, overcome by the appeals of his former friend, threw down his arms, wept bitterly over his declensions, and returned in penitence to the Church which he had deserted. This tradition, which is transmitted doubtlessly with considerable amplifications, is probably not without some foundation. It is thoroughly characteristic of John, and reminds us of that scene in his early life by the Sea of Galilee, when, at the call of Jesus, his great love constrained him to yield up his all to follow his Master's footsteps, and to become in future so warmly devoted to Him as to be worthy of the appellation, "the disciple whom Jesus loved." A third tradition, and one we have already

referred to, is that which rests upon the testimony of Tertullian, and which informs us that the apostle was carried to Rome, and was there cast into a caldron of boiling oil, which, however, was rendered powerless to hurt him.¹ Jerome repeats this tradition, and seems to have had no doubt of its trustworthiness, though others are of an opposite opinion. It may or may not be true, but it is unquestionable, on the one hand, that the early Christians were sometimes exposed to perils as great; and on the other, that by miraculous interposition ways of escape were opened up for them. There is a fourth legend, and a very beautiful one, that John possessed a tame partridge, which he was in the habit of caressing and treating with the tenderest care.² According to this tradition, a huntsman was one day passing by and found the apostle amusing himself with his favourite partridge. The young man expressed astonishment at seeing him thus employed, and asked him in amazement how he, so venerable for age and renowned for sanctity, could thus amuse himself? In reply, the apostle referred to the huntsman's bow and arrows, and asked him if he always kept his bow bent? The huntsman answered that to do so would be to take away its elasticity, and render it useless. If, then, replied St John, you unbend your bow to prevent its becoming useless, do not be shocked if I unbend my mind for the same reason.

¹ Tertul., *De Præs. Hær.*, c. 36.

² John Cassian, *Collat.*, xxiv. 21.

This legend, like that of his pursuit of the young robber, though enlarged by traditional embellishments, seems at the same time to be founded on truth. There is a naturalness about it; and it shows us that John—apostle as he was—was a man like ourselves, with the same infirmities and needs, and admitted the necessity for recreation amid the activities of even the holiest life. The next tradition we shall mention is that which informs us that when John was returning from Patmos, and was not far from the city of Ephesus, there met him a funeral procession coming forth from the gates. On inquiry, he found that it was the funeral of Drusiana, in whose house he had lodged, and who had been eminent in gifts of charity and works of love. The apostle was greatly grieved on learning this, and requested the young men who were bearing her bier to place it on the ground. He then prayed earnestly that God would restore her to life; and in answer to his prayer she was restored, and returned to her house, and to her friends who were lamenting her loss.¹ In addition to these, there is a beautiful tradition about John's last visits to the Ephesian Churches, for which we are indebted to Jerome. The tradition is very characteristic of all the conceptions we have formed of John's character and disposition. Jerome tells us that when the apostle was unable through age and infirmity to walk to the Christian assemblies,

¹ Mrs Jameson's *Sacred and Legendary Art*, i. 167.

he was wont to be carried thither, and that his address, time after time and meeting after meeting, was contained in these simple but affectionate words: "Little children, love one another."¹ On being asked why he always repeated that single sentence, his answer was, "Because that is the Lord's command; and if that is done, enough is done."²

It is the uniform testimony of ancient writers that John not only survived the other apostles, but that he lived to a very great age. There are legends about his death and burial, and even about his being still alive, to which we will briefly refer, and which were obviously founded on John, xxi. 22. One of these legends is that he did not die, but, Enoch-like, was translated without death; another, that he laid himself in his grave which he had prepared in his lifetime, but that he did not actually die, but only slept; another, that he is still living; and finally, a fourth, that God raised him from the grave, that he might bear witness to the truth, and might in the last times, along with Enoch and Elijah, resist the encroachments of Antichrist.

The age at which John died has been variously stated. According to some, his death took place when he was eighty-nine years old; according to others, a hundred; and according to others still, a hundred and twenty.

¹ In Ep. ad Gal. vi. 10—*Filioli diligite alterutrum.*

² *Et si solum fiat sufficit.*

Irenæus, however, who is the oldest witness, mentions no age, but simply says that he died in the reign of Trajan, who began to reign 98 A.D.¹ As we have shown, Polycrates, Origen, and Eusebius testify that he died at Ephesus; and from their language, it is probable that he died, not by martyrdom, but by a natural death. Polycrates informs us that he was buried at Ephesus,² and that his grave was wont to be pointed out there.³ It is generally understood that John never married, and hence we find him spoken of as virgin-like (*παρθενος*—*παρθενος*, *virgo*).⁴ It is not said, nor can we tell, in what circle or in what circumstances his closing hours were passed, but there is little doubt that in his last moments, as at the Last Supper, he was “leaning on Jesus’ bosom.”

¹ Euseb., H. E. iii. 23.

² Ibid., v. 24.

³ Ibid., vii. 25.

⁴ Tertullian, De Monogamia, xvii.; Ambrosiaster on 2 Cor. xi. 2.
“All the apostles, except John and Paul, were married.”

II.

GENUINENESS OF THE GOSPEL.

IF St John was, as we contend, the author of the fourth Gospel, it must have been written not later than the end of the first century. To assign to it any later date is virtually to surrender the question of its authenticity. It is maintained, therefore, by all orthodox critics, that the Gospel existed, and was recognised as the work of the Apostle John, in the beginning of the second century. On the other hand, the dates assigned to John's Gospel by those who object to its authenticity are subsequent to the age of the apostle, and vary considerably. The general affirmation of these objectors is, that it was not written till well on in the second century, though there are modifications of this opinion by later writers. Baur assigns as its date 160 A.D. Keim, in 1867, thinks that it was written in the beginning of the second century, between 100-117 A.D.; but in 1873 he gives a later date, and fixes it at 130 A.D. Hilgenfeld, in 1854, puts it in the second quarter of the second century; but in 1871 he speaks more definitely, and names

135 A.D. as its probable date. Schenkel thinks that it was composed between 110-120 A.D. Tayler places its origin between 135-163 A.D. Davidson is more definite, and decides upon 150 A.D. as the date of its appearance. It is evident from these dates that the opponents of our Gospel's authenticity are not agreed as to the precise period of its composition, but they all agree in fixing upon a date which, if it could be substantiated, would disprove its Johannine authorship.

It may be interesting to give in this place quotations from some of the above-named authors, showing the conclusions at which they have arrived as to the date of John's Gospel, and the arguments which they urge in support of its post-apostolic authorship.

Mr Tayler says: "If I am asked, Who was its author, and when it was written? I confess I am unable to give a categorical answer. If Papias, as Eusebius informs us, cited testimonies from the First Epistle of John—as I can have little doubt that the author of that epistle and of the Gospel were one and the same person—the author must have been living, and both works probably written, before the middle of the second century. The death of Papias is usually assigned to 163 A.D. We find thus a probable *terminus ad quem*. Can we suggest a *terminus a quo*? It has occurred to me (as I have already intimated), in studying the internal indications of the fourth Gospel, and

comparing them with the known course of historical events, that they point to a time when the Church had finally emancipated itself from Jewish bondage, and Jerusalem had ceased to be its centre of religious interest and reverence. Such a time I find most clearly indicated in the results of the suppression of the Jewish revolt under Bar Cochba, subsequent to 135 A.D. This is, of course, nothing more than conjecture, supported by no direct evidence. Nevertheless, between these two events—the substitution of *Ælia Capitolina* for Jerusalem by Hadrian, and the death of Papias—I seem to find a period within which the origin of the fourth Gospel might, without improbability, be placed.”¹

It is important to notice carefully the words we have just quoted, and to examine the evidence on which Mr Tayler rests his conclusions, or rather his conjectures. There is, it will be observed, no attempt at argument, and nothing more formidable than a mere guess. In the strict historical sense, he is unable to regard the Gospel as of apostolic origin, and as to “who was its author, and when it was written,” he can give no “categorical answer.” It is not from certainty, but from supposition; not from evidence, but from conjecture—a conjecture which, by his own confession, is not supported by any “direct evidence,”—that he has come to believe that “between 135 and 163” the Gospel may have had its origin. One would have thought that he would

¹ Tayler—*An Attempt*, &c., p. 150.

scarcely have invited us to renounce the faith of centuries without giving us substantial and satisfactory reasons for doing so. But instead of this, he offers us a theory which has no historical basis—nothing, according to his own admission, but a conjecture for its foundation. In another place the same writer says: “In the work of Theophilus of Antioch, addressed to Autolycus, which must have been written in the reign of Commodus, and therefore subsequent to the year 180 A.D., we have for the first time a citation from the fourth Gospel with the name of its author, John;”¹ and the inference which Mr Tayler and others of the same school wish us to draw from this is, that John’s Gospel had only recently appeared, and was at that time just beginning to be recognised by the Church as the work of the apostle John.

Keim, though he fixes an earlier date for the origin of our Gospel than Tayler does, is no less decided in opinion that it was not the work of John, and in the exposition of his views says: “While, therefore, the ancients, and recently Ewald and Weizsäcker, as well as Tischendorf, who thinks that all the four Gospels ‘must’ have been extant soon after the destruction of Jerusalem, have fixed the origin of the fourth Gospel at the close of the first century, the Tübingen school has, with many variations, supposed that it took place in the latter half of the second century, 160-170. We

¹ Tayler—*An Attempt*, &c., p. 66.

maintain that it was, according to all appearance, at the beginning of the second century, the time of that Emperor Trajan in whose reign John, according to Irenæus, must have lived, about 110-115.¹ . . .

“The results of our inquiry only declare that the Gospel was published in the beginning of the second century under the name of the Apostle John, by one who was well acquainted with the Holy Land, but who was a liberal Jewish Christian, favourable to the Gentiles—probably one of the Jewish dispersion in Asia Minor. . . . What induced the author to give the name of the Apostle John to his Gospel can be conjectured with at least some probability. John was zealous against the false doctrine, and he was, moreover, one of those beloved disciples of Jesus to whom the Gospels very early ascribed a closer acquaintance with their Master, and whom the author wished now to array against the mighty crisis of the day, against Gnosticism, and in favour of the united Church which was formed of Jews and Gentiles. He could not cause Paul to speak, who was no original witness, and was a man of controversy, which did not correspond with the author’s consciousness of unity. Of the other beloved disciples of Jesus, James had died too early on the very threshold of the apostolic age; and the use which had been made of Peter long before was pointedly in the sense of a strictly Jewish partisan. John only remained.”²

¹ Jesus of Nazara, i. 207.

² Ibid., i. 223-225.

Davidson, whose views on the authorship of John's Gospel are very advanced, and who assigns its appearance to 150 A.D., says: "An immediate disciple of John himself can hardly have written the Gospel, because it is so anti-Jewish and Hellenic. If it proceeded from one of those presbyters in Asia Minor of whom Irenæus speaks as being closely connected with John, the fact of its being regarded as the apostle's could be more easily explained. In that case, it might be called a product of the Johannine spirit *indirectly*, originating in the sphere of the apostle's labours under different influences. But the presbyter of Asia Minor must have been baptised with a larger spirit than that of John the apostle. Jewish narrowness must have given place to a wide catholicity. In fact, he must have had a philosophic reflectiveness unlike the fiery energy of the apostle—a profound calmness of mind capable of discussing the greatest spiritual problems. . . .

"The date already specified (A.D. 150) agrees with the character of the times. Gnosticism had not become odious to the Church, and therefore the moderate Gnosticism of the Gospel would find a point of contact in the contemporaneous consciousness. Montanism, with its doctrine of the Paraclete, was not yet fully developed, but was rather in its early stage, else the Gospel would not have favoured so unguardedly the fundamental principle that the Holy Spirit continues the work of Christ in the Church. This suits the date A.D.

150, or the time of Justin, whose view of the Logos comes nearest the Johannine."¹

It is important, then, to ascertain what evidence we have on the orthodox side—evidence to satisfy us that the fourth Gospel was in existence before the dates assigned to it by the Tübingen school, and that it is the work of him to whom for so many centuries it has been uniformly ascribed.

1. WHAT THE GOSPEL SAYS.

The evidence we shall first produce, and on which we place great weight, is that which is derived from the Gospel itself. The Gospel to a very considerable extent is its own witness, and bears, we think, ample testimony in support of its authenticity. The writer claims to have been an eyewitness of the life of Jesus (John, i. 14), and to have been the disciple whom Jesus loved (John, xxi. 20-24). If, then, the writer was not John, and if our Gospel was the work of some other hand, its author, whoever he was who has succeeded in persuading the world to believe in its apostolic origin, must be pronounced to have been "the prince of forgers."

No one who studies the Gospel without prejudice can fail to see who is meant by "the beloved disciple." It has been the belief of ages that John was the disciple referred to. Lützelbelger's assertion that

¹ Introduction to New Testament, ii. 446-448.

Andrew is the disciple so described is a simple invention. It is obvious that, whoever the beloved disciple was, he belonged to that inner circle of whom we have already spoken, and who enjoyed peculiar and pre-eminent privileges. That circle, however, consisted of Peter, James, and John, and no mention is made of Andrew, or of any of the other apostles. Of these three it could not have been Peter, as he is spoken of in such a way as to distinguish him from "the beloved disciple" (John, xiii. 24, xx. 2, xxi. 7, 20). It only remains to make our choice between James and John. It is evident, however, that it could not have been James: (1) because we learn from Acts, xii. 2 that James suffered martyrdom by the hand of Herod Agrippa, which must have taken place at an early date in the Christian Church; whereas, according to John, xxi. 24, "the beloved disciple" must have lived to a great age, which confessedly John did; and (2) because the uniform tradition of the Church has ascribed the distinguishing epithet to the Apostle John. It is well known, too, that our Lord's saying in John, xxi. 23 concerning "the beloved disciple" was interpreted to signify that that disciple should not die, but should live till the coming of our Lord. Accordingly, we find, as we have pointed out, that the notion has prevailed that John did not really die, but was only slumbering in his grave. This notion manifestly had its origin in the saying of our Lord above referred to, and therefore con-

firms the belief that "the beloved disciple" was John. It is a notable fact also, and ought not to be overlooked, that the author of our Gospel never once mentions by name the sons of Zebedee (John, i. 35, 40 ; xiii. 23 ; xviii. 15 ; xix. 26 ; xx. 2), though he is careful to give the names of other apostles. Thaddeus is mentioned once, Philip twice, Andrew four times, Thomas five times, Nathanael five times, Judas eight times, and Peter thirty-three times. But there is no ground for thinking that any of these was the eyewitness who writes the Gospel. There are only two principal names amissing in the narrative—James the son of Zebedee, who had been early beheaded by Herod ; and John, who, with Peter and James, was one of the most intimate disciples of Jesus, and one of the so-called pillar apostles. There is nothing to explain the non-mention of his name in the fourth Gospel, unless it be that he was the author of it himself. From all that has been said, it is scarcely possible to doubt that John, and no one else, was the "other disciple" whom we find so frequently mentioned with Peter, who stood by the cross with the women, and first believed at the empty sepulchre in the resurrection of the Master. "This follows indirectly, but yet without a doubt, from the mention of the memorable *tenth* hour, in which the friend of Andrew and Peter was brought for the first time to Jesus—a statement which is either totally without occasion or purpose, or it is the writer's in-

effaceable recollection of the happiest hour in his life."

It is remarkable also that, when the writer refers to the Baptist, he never adds the appellation or adjunct Baptist, but always speaks of him simply as John (John, i. 15-35, iii. 23, 25, 26). It seems to us that there is strong presumptive evidence in this that the writer was himself John. Had it been otherwise, he would doubtless have been careful to distinguish the two Johns by adding the epithet Baptist. In other and similar cases he is very mindful to observe this distinction. For instance, he invariably distinguishes the two Judases from each other (John, xii. 4, xiii. 26, xiv. 22). Simon Zelotes, too, is always distinguished from Simon Peter. Thomas uniformly receives his surname (John, ii. 26, xx. 24, xxi. 2). If, then, the writer of our Gospel had not been the Apostle John, it is almost a necessity to conclude that he would have spoken of the other John as the Baptist, and not barely as John. It appears to us, therefore, that there is evidence of the Johannine authorship of our Gospel in the facts we have just stated, and that upon no other theory can we explain why the author whilst he makes mention of the other apostles by name, makes no such mention of John the son of Zebedee; or why, whilst he is careful to distinguish other disciples of the same name, he never once designates John, the forerunner of Christ, by the appellation "the Baptist." On the whole,

we cannot sum up our views on the point which we are now considering, in more suitable terms than those which Credner employs, when referring to the fact that John the Baptist is never called anything but John in our Gospel, while other apostles who have the same name are always carefully distinguished. "This," says he, "may easily be explained on the supposition that the apostle himself was the writer; for in the early history of Christianity these are the only two prominent characters of the name of John. And if it was the apostle himself who was speaking, it was superfluous to use any other term to distinguish the Baptist from himself, especially as he always speaks of himself as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved.'"¹

It is evident, in addition to all this, that the writer of the fourth Gospel wished it to be accepted as the work of the Apostle John. Dr Davidson, whose opposition to our Gospel is clear and decided, admits this, and says: "It is plain that the author meant his work to be taken for the apostle's. He intimates that he was an immediate disciple of the Lord, the beloved disciple, who was none other than the Apostle John, and avoids all mention of the name."² Baur writes in similar terms, and puts it thus: "In one word, the author of the Gospel speaks of his identity only as one who concerned himself not with the person but with the mat-

¹ Einl. in das N. T., p. 209.

² Intro. to N. T., ii. 442.

ter. His Gospel shall be regarded as Johanne, but it shall not carry the apostle's name on the face of it. At least, the author himself will not once distinctly utter it in order to make it his own; only the reader shall be led on to make this combination, and to place the apostle in the closest possible connection with a Gospel written in his spirit."¹

These quotations are not creditable to their authors, and point to a design and a duplicity wholly out of keeping with all that we know of the writer of the fourth Gospel. If the view they give us of the author's character be correct—if, as they insinuate, he wished to make his Gospel popular under false pretences—they place him before us in a most unfavourable light. It seems to us that his offence would have been less had he boldly assumed the name of John, than to have written, as they assert, with the premeditated design of making his work to appear as that of the apostle. It is no extenuation of this offence to reply that literary forgeries were not uncommon in the second century, and that the object of these forgeries was not to deceive, but only to instruct. If what is here alleged be true, it is not to be forgotten that these works were of a very different character from the one under review, and are not to be named in the same list with our Gospels. Besides all this, we do not hesitate to say, from what we know of this writer, that to act with such duplicity

¹ Brit. Quar. Rev., Oct. 1872.

as has been insinuated would have been wholly repugnant to his character, and that it would have been impossible for him to have attempted the enforcement of truth at the expense of honesty.

There are several passages in which the writer alludes to himself, and from which, as we have said, he leads us to infer that he was an eyewitness. The first passage we shall refer to is chap. i. 14—"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory," &c. Though the *we* in this verse may be used in an unrestricted sense, and may apply to the apostles generally, as well as to others who were witnesses of Christ's ministry, there is nothing to preclude the supposition that the writer was one of those who were so favoured, and that therefore he describes what he himself had witnessed.

The next passage we shall quote is chap. xix. 35—"And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe." One would think that this verse is plain enough in its meaning; and yet it has been interpreted in different and opposite senses. Dr Davidson infers from it that "the author of the Gospel indicates that he was not an eyewitness of the sufferings of Jesus."¹ Others, of more orthodox opinions, acquiesce in this criticism, and admit that the writer here quotes the testimony of an eyewitness to substan-

¹ Intro. to N. T., ii. 436.

tiate a fact which he himself did not see personally. The fact testified to is the piercing of Christ's side, and the subsequent effusion of blood and water. It is alleged by these writers that this occurrence took place during John's absence from the crucifixion with the mother of Jesus, whom He had just consigned to that disciple's care. They hold, therefore, that John received his information of this remarkable occurrence from one on whose veracity he could rely, and that this is the significance of the verse under consideration. To us, on the other hand, the passage seems to bear a different interpretation from the one that has just been given, and we venture to think that the writer was himself the person who testified to the fact which he records. It seems to us that the personal opinions of the narrator, which are expressed in the subsequent verses, are so intermixed with his narrative as to indicate that the writer and the eyewitness are one and the same person. This is an interpretation which, we believe, will most generally commend itself, and which will be all the more appreciated when it is remembered, that verse 35 throws its ægis or confirmation, not only over the one fact to which it is supposed to have special reference, but also over all the circumstances which are narrated in the context. It may be safely concluded, therefore, from what has been said, that the writer of this verse, to whose testimony the author so specially and solemnly appeals, was himself the eye-

witness of the occurrences which took place at the crucifixion.

Another passage which has been relied upon to prove that the writer was himself an eyewitness is chap. xxi. 24, 25—"This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true. And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." The authenticity of this passage has been called in question; but we shall deal with this point in a subsequent paragraph. These verses seem to us to establish the fact that the beloved disciple is the person who testifies, and is also the person who writes. It is not easy to see or to sanction any other interpretation of these words. Whoever the writer was, he was evidently one of the seven disciples that are spoken of in chap. xxi. 2. These were, Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples whose names are not mentioned. The beloved disciple, however, was neither Peter, Thomas, nor Nathanael, and must have belonged to that inner circle of three favoured disciples of whom we have already spoken. As he was not Peter—one of the three—neither could he have been James, the second in the circle (Acts, xii. 2). It follows, therefore, that St John, the remaining one, was the beloved disciple, and was, therefore, the author of our fourth Gospel.

There are other passages which show the writer's personal acquaintance with the incidents which he records, and a few of these may be fitly introduced in this place. The following instances will be sufficient to establish our proposition :—

"John also was baptising in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was *much water there*; . . . for John was *not yet* cast into prison" (iii. 23, 24).

"Then cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called *Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there*" (iv. 5, 6).

In the account of the feeding of the five thousand, there are several particulars which lead us to the belief that the writer was an eyewitness—*e.g.*, "*One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here,*" &c. "Now there was *much grass in the place.*" "Gather up the *fragments that remain, that nothing be lost*" (vi. 8-12).

"Now, about the *midst of the feast*, Jesus went up *into the temple*, and taught" (vii. 14).

"And Jesus walked in the temple, *in Solomon's porch*" (x. 23).

"Then took Mary a *pound* of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair; and the house *was filled* with the odour of the ointment" (xii. 3).

Then finally the writer mentions, what is omitted by

the other evangelists, the name of the high priest's servant whose ear Peter cut off, and tells us, "The servant's name was *Malchus*" (xviii. 10).

Though other passages of a similar character might easily be added, those we have quoted seem to us sufficient for our purpose. It is difficult to see how the minuteness with which they enter into detail can be explained in any other way than on the supposition that the writer was himself the witness of what he records. The idea of intentional deception must be rejected, and is wholly inconsistent with all that we know of the character of the writer.

It may be suitable to refer, in this place, to some of those passages in which it is alleged that the writer betrays a post-apostolic and non-Palestinian origin. The first passage we shall notice is the prologue, in which the writer introduces the doctrine of the Logos. On account of the prominent place which the fourth Gospel assigns to this doctrine, it is maintained that the work was written in post-apostolic times. It is argued by the advocates of a later authorship that the doctrine had no such prominence in the apostolic age—that at that time it was confined to a limited circle—and that it was but little understood by the popular intelligence. It seems to us that the notice of the Logos doctrine by John has been made too much of in the discussion, and that its connection with Philo, to whom it is generally traced, has been too much insisted upon. At the

most there are only some four places in the opening verses of the first chapter in which the doctrine is specially referred to. But it is possible to explain these references as satisfactorily by supposing the writer's acquaintance with the Old Testament as by assuming his acquaintance with the works of Philo. "It is morally certain that the writer of the fourth Gospel must have been acquainted with the books of the Old Testament. It is by no means so certain that he must have been acquainted with the works of Philo or imbued with Alexandrian thought. Least of all is it needful that we should search in the schools of Alexandria for that which may certainly be found much nearer at hand in the Old Testament, when the one *must* have been familiar to the writer, and the other perchance *may* have been." Davidson admits the difficulty of assigning the origin of the Logos doctrine, as we have it in the fourth Gospel, to the writings of Philo, and is evidently at a loss to determine its proper source. "The fourth Gospel," he says, "has an important advance upon Philo's doctrine, when it announces the incarnation of the Logos in Jesus. In this respect the author expresses an idea foreign to the Alexandrian philosophy. Though the Logos is almost, if not altogether, hypostatised in Philo, his incarnation is alien to that writer's conceptions. The Word—the Son of God—was manifested personally in the flesh. Whence this element was derived we cannot tell. Did it exist before it was

incorporated in the Gospel? Was it the result of philosophical reflection subsequent to Philo? Did Hellenic culture excogitate it? Or did the writer himself educe it from the depths of his own consciousness? These are questions we cannot answer; and therefore an important link between Philonism and the Logos theory of the fourth Gospel is missing.”¹ These words plainly show us that in this writer’s opinion it is by no means certain that the Logos theory of John’s Gospel is traceable to the works of Philo, and, so far, we accept of his conclusion. On the whole, we are inclined to hold that “it is to the Old Testament rather than to Philo that we must turn for illustration of the apostolic Logos.” In any case, we are of opinion that nothing can be drawn from the Logos doctrine, as given in the prologue, to upset our belief in the early or Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel; and that the traces it affords of John’s acquaintance with the Old Testament version of it are as full, to say the least, as those which it supplies of his acquaintance with Philo’s version.

Again, it has been urged that the writer speaks of the Jews as if he himself belonged to a different race, and was “distant,” as Davidson expresses it, “from their religion and customs.” In speaking of the Jewish festivals, for instance, he says, “The Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh” (vi. 4). And again, “The Jews’

¹ Intro. to N. T., ii. 341.

feast of tabernacles was at hand" (vii. 2). There are other expressions of the same description, but these will suffice. It may be admitted that, at first sight, the language in these quotations seems somewhat surprising, and not what might have been expected from a Jewish writer. It must not be forgotten, however, by way of explanation, that when John wrote his Gospel, Jerusalem had been destroyed, and the Jews had ceased to be a nation. Be it remembered also that, according to tradition, the Gospel was written at Ephesus, and was designed not for the Jewish, but mainly for the Gentile community. In these circumstances, therefore, it is little wonder that the evangelist should refer to his countrymen as "the Jews," and speak of their national festivals as things unknown, or but partially known to those to whom he was writing.

Another passage which is supposed to be inconsistent with a Jewish authorship is chap. xviii. 13, &c., where the writer, speaking of Caiaphas, says, "Who was high priest that same year." And from this it has been held that he was under the impression that the high priest was elected annually. The fact also that Annas is apparently conjoined with Caiaphas, is held by Dr Davidson to be "scarcely compatible with the authorship of a Palestinian Jew." With regard to the first point—namely, the annual election—it is to be borne in mind that the object of the writer was not to fix any date or specific time by the words he uses, but

to show that he who uttered the words, "It is expedient that one man should die for the nation," did so in virtue of his official position. With regard to the second point, it is to be observed that in Luke, iii. 2, the expression there is, "the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas;" and that in Acts, iv. 6, we read, "Annas the high priest and Caiaphas." From a consideration of these points, it seems to us that John's representation is capable of a satisfactory solution; and we are disposed to urge that when Caiaphas was elected or elevated to the high-priesthood, he was willing that Annas, who was his father-in-law, should continue to share the functions and honours of the office. This explanation receives confirmation by the fact that Christ was subjected to two examinations, one before Annas, who had been for many years high priest, and one before Caiaphas, who was his son-in-law and successor. The examination of these and similar passages in no way weakens our faith in the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel, and we are disposed to hold that the arguments founded on them by the objectors to the Gospel's authenticity are not entitled to much consideration.

It may be mentioned that Br etschneider, Baur, and others, allege that they have discovered mistakes in the author's description of places, and argue from this that he could neither have been a Palestinian Jew, nor well acquainted with the land of Judea. Little weight

we think need be attached to this argument, and the admission of Keim sufficiently disposes of it. "The alleged errors," he says, "about Bethany and Bethesda, Cana and Kedron, Salem and Sychar, about the high priest of the year, and about the distances of Cana and Capernaum; Bethany and Peræa, we need believe in the less, because the author shows elsewhere a fair acquaintance with the land, and because even the hardest explains itself from a particular design."¹

If we look at these passages and consider them collectively, they furnish, in our opinion, no evidence to unsettle our conviction that the writer of the fourth Gospel was a native of Palestine, and had received a Jewish education.

The genuineness of verses 24 and 25 of chapter xxi. falls now to be considered. The opinion of critics is considerably divided on the question, and all we shall attempt will be to state briefly the views which have been expressed on the subject. Sanday,² while admitting that there may be some doubt as to the 24th verse, is of opinion that the 25th verse stands on a different footing, and that its authenticity is beyond challenge. On the other hand, Tholuck³ unhesitatingly concludes that neither of the verses can be ascribed to John. Ebrard⁴ agrees with Tholuck, and affirms that

¹ Jesus of Nazara, i. 179.

² Authorship and Historical Character, &c. p. 270.

³ Com. on St John, p. 45.

⁴ Gospel History, pp. 566, 567.

these verses must have been written, not by John, but by one who stood in close relationship to him. These, generally speaking, are the opinions which are held in reference to these verses, and it may be considered presumptuous in us to take upon ourselves to decide the question. At the same time, we do not hesitate to say that our sympathies are with those who, like Sanday, believe in their genuineness. It is a fact, too, that these verses are not wanting in any manuscript or translation; and that, whether they were written by John or not, it is evident that the Gospel as we have it was widely circulated immediately after the apostle's death. And even if we allow that the expression, *we know*, in verse 24, points to a different authorship, the worst that can come of it is that these verses furnish us with testimony for the Gospel's genuineness from those among John's contemporaries who were qualified to give a guarantee for the authenticity and credibility of the Gospel.

2. WHAT TRADITION SAYS.

The next proof is from traditionary testimony. The evidence of tradition in favour of our Gospel's authenticity is not unimportant, and ought not to be overlooked. This evidence the adherents of the Tübingen school profess to discredit, and to discard as of no value. As an auxiliary argument, however, it is fairly entitled

to consideration. The argument amounts to this: Tradition, which goes back for wellnigh eighteen hundred years, has almost uniformly ascribed the Gospel to St John, and the antiquity and universality of the tradition can only be accounted for on the supposition that it is founded on fact. On the contrary supposition—that the tradition is not a reliable one—it is difficult to account for its rise, and it is difficult to account for its reception. If John was not the author of the Gospel, it may well be asked, when and why was the authorship ascribed to him? To affirm with Lützelberger¹ that the author of the fourth Gospel was a Samaritan, who composed it about the middle of the second century, and that some years after it was accepted as the work of the apostle, and was received into the sacred canon without resistance or remonstrance, is to propagate a theory which has not even a shadow of evidence to support it. The assertion, though it has been made with seeming seriousness, has no probability on its side; and the difficulties that beset it are increased when we consider the importance of the subject-matter of the Gospel. If it had dealt with themes of passing interest—if its contents had been of temporary significance—it is conceivable that as a forgery it might have been accepted without examination or protest. But the subjects of which the Gospel treats are of infinite importance. They have a bearing on man's eternal destiny; they have to do

¹ Die Kirkliche Tradition über den Apostel Johannes. 1840.

with the needs and hopes of man not in one age only, but in all ages ; not in one nation only, but in all nations. And when we consider the magnitude of the subject-matter of the Gospel, as well as its connection with universal humanity, it seems clear that the difficulty of passing off the Gospel as John's, if it were not his, and of getting others to admit its authenticity, is insurmountable. In addition to this, there is nothing in the writings of the early Christians to show that any attempt was made by those who knew better to introduce a Gospel as John's which was the work of some other and later writer, and to prevail upon the Christian Churches and communities to receive the forgery as an apostolic work. It was left to the ingenuity of the nineteenth century to invent this theory, and to circulate a hypothesis which a candid criticism has no hesitation in pronouncing to be no other and no better than "the baseless fabric of a vision."

The difficulties that arise in connection with the hypothesis of an intentional deception cannot be overestimated. Under such a supposition, what was difficult before becomes more difficult, and what was strange before becomes more strange. It is admitted on all sides that the Gospel not only existed but was extensively circulated before the year 180 A.D. Is it possible then to believe, or will any one contend, that the Gospel which, according to our opponents, began to be circulated about the year 150 A.D., the alleged date of its origin, was

not only received by the Christian world, but received as an apostolic work within 30 years of its first appearance—received, too, without question or controversy? Then again, on the supposition that our Gospel is the work of an impostor, why did not the unknown author, who must have been possessed of no ordinary tact and skill, avail himself of the already existing narratives of the Synoptists, and reproduce their accounts of our Lord's life after his own fashion, instead of writing a history apparently at variance with theirs, and consequently liable and likely to provoke opposition?

In addition to all this, it seems to us that in assigning the authorship of the fourth Gospel to the second century, it is not easy to explain why the sceptical writers of modern times, with their great scholarship and critical acumen, assign it, with its profound thoughts and its divine disclosures, to a period which was confessedly undistinguished either by the depths of its researches or the spirituality of its conceptions. If it appeared, as is alleged, during the controversies of the second century, it is strange that the religious controversialists of that period should have accepted it as the work of our apostle. And if it had at the same time a special reference to some of the great themes which were then agitating the Church, and claimed to be the work of an apostle, which claim would add considerably to the weight of its authority, it is not easy to understand why none of the contending parties controverted

its claim, but all admitted it without even the show of resistance. In fine, the tradition in our opinion is sufficiently far-reaching and uniform to warrant us in believing that it rests on a solid and substantial basis. The traditionary evidence therefore, though not of itself sufficient to establish the Johannine origin of our Gospel, ought not to be overlooked in the discussion, and is fully entitled to a separate and special consideration.

3. WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS.

The next evidence we shall adduce is that which is derived from the testimony of ancient writers. This evidence is of a direct and satisfactory character; and if we consider it without prejudice or partiality, it is scarcely possible to doubt the conclusion to which it leads. In the writings to which we refer—writings which carry us back to about the close of the first century—there are such references to our Gospel as are sufficient to satisfy the impartial critic that it was in existence and in use at the end of the first century. Even Wiesse, who is no supporter of our Gospel's apostolic authorship, admits the sufficiency of this testimony, and allows that if the question of authenticity were to be judged and determined by external evidence alone, its Johannine origin would be placed beyond doubt. Baur, however, and others think differently, and contend that there is no trace of our

Gospel till well on in the second century. They affirm, as we have already remarked, that "in the work of Theophilus of Antioch, A.D. 180, we have for the first time a citation from the fourth Gospel, with the name of its author John;" and they argue, that in the absence of citation there is no evidence that it was known to those writers whose works were in circulation before the time of Theophilus. It is important to observe that the word "citation" is used by these writers in a limited sense, and is meant to signify a quotation, with the title of the work quoted from, and the name of its author. This is the sense which Mr Tayler assigns to the word; and his contention is, that as in this sense there is no citation from the fourth Gospel till the year 180, there is therefore no reliable testimony that it existed before that date, or was recognised before that time as an apostolic production.

It seems to us, however, that an "allusion" or a "reference" may afford as convincing proof of a writer's acquaintance with a work as a citation, and of the estimation in which that work was held among the writer's contemporaries. If, for instance, any Greek or Latin historian had written an account of the Jews, and to illustrate God's providential dealings with them had stated that, to carry out His purposes, the Jordan had opened a pathway, or the ravens had provided the necessary supply, the reference would be as sufficient to establish the historian's acquaintance with Joshua

and Kings, and consequently the existence and circulation of these books in his days, as if these books had been quoted or appealed to by name. It by no means follows, therefore, that though there is no citation in the limited sense, that allusions to or quotations from a work are not sufficient evidence of the source from which they were derived, or of the writer's acquaintance with that source. It is, moreover, important to mention that the same objection applies to the other Gospels, and it is not to be forgotten that there is no citation of these, in the limited sense, in the works of the apostolic Fathers, or of the post-apostolic Fathers, till near the time of Theophilus. Mr Rowland has well observed that "the absence of citation being general to the four Gospels, and not special to the fourth, it follows that no inference can be drawn from non-citation which is not applicable to each of and all the Gospels; and if one of the Gospels was in existence in the first century, then the deduction is clear that the fourth Gospel was or might have been in existence also, unaffected by any inference from the absence of citations. . . . Citation and even allusions to the Gospel would also have different degrees of probability proportioned to the length of time the Gospels had been in existence when each Father wrote. The Epistles of St Paul, as the most ancient publications, would have the highest chance of citation; and accordingly, a few express citations of St Paul's Epistles

are found in the works of the apostolic Fathers. . . . Thus all the citations in the first century, and even at the commencement of the second century, are confined to some of the Epistles of St Paul, although no doubt exists that when these citations were made, the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke were in existence also. This observation should be borne in mind when we are considering the earliest allusions of the Fathers to the fourth Gospel.”¹

It is well also to bear in mind that the genuineness of the Gospels was not a disputed question in the primitive Churches, and the writings of the early Fathers, therefore, were not composed with a view to establish their genuineness. They were meant more to enlighten certain communities with which their authors were connected, than to give information about the authorship of the Gospel narratives. At the same time, though they were written for the instruction and guidance of certain Churches, they yet abound with allusions to the Gospel narratives of sufficient directness to indicate the particular Gospel to which the allusion is made.

There are two ways in which the testimonies of ancient writers may be presented, while the result to which they lead, and the conclusions to which they conduct us, are the same. The one is to begin with those authorities, such as Theophilus and others, whose testimony admits of no doubt, and from them to ascend

¹ Fourth Gospel, pp. 13-16.

the stream till we arrive at the fountain-head or first source of testimonies. The other is to begin with the earliest writers, and to descend the stream till we reach those testimonies about which there can be no dispute. It is a matter of little consequence which method is preferred; and our preference is to adhere to the plan which has been generally adopted, and to begin at the beginning.

The first witness we shall adduce is Hermas, who lived about 100 A.D.. In his 'Pastor' or 'Shepherd' there are what seem to be direct allusions to the fourth Gospel. He says, for instance—"The gate is the Son of God; this is the only way of access to the Lord."¹ It seems to us that there is an unmistakable reference here to John, x. 7, 9, xiv. 6; and if so, it is conclusive evidence of the existence of John's Gospel in the time of Hermas. The author of 'Supernatural Religion,' however, is of an opposite opinion, and replies that "the parable in John, x. 1-9 is quite different from that of Hermas, and there is a persistent use of different terminology."² The weight of this criticism lies in the use of "gate" in Hermas, and not "door" as in John. "I am the door"³ is the expression in John. "The gate is the Son of God" is the language of Hermas. It appears to us that there is no force in the

¹ Simil. ix. 12.—Ἡ δὲ πύλη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν, αὕτη μὴ ἐισοδὸς ἐστίν πρὸς τὸν κύριον.

² Sup. Relig., ii. 258.

³ John, x. 7, 9.—Ἐγὼ εἰμι ἡ θύρα.

objection. In a quotation or allusion, the one word might correctly enough be used for the other, and the sentiment or significance of the one is not much different from that of the other. It may be quite true that there are passages in other canonical books analogous to that which we have quoted from *Hermas*, but any reader who has no prejudices to contend with, and no preconceived opinions to influence him, will turn first to *John* for that analogy which is both the most apparent and the most direct. If so, it follows that in the time of *Hermas* our Gospel was in existence, and was known to him and his contemporaries. Upon the whole, therefore, though the reference to *John* may not be so clear or conclusive as to be beyond controversy, it is, at all events, of sufficient directness to bring it within the range of probable allusions.

Ignatius, to whose testimony we shall next refer, was Bishop of Antioch from about 70 to 107 A.D. In this latter year he suffered martyrdom under *Trajan*. He was a contemporary of *John*, and in one of his epistles—the Epistle to the Romans—there appears to be an allusion to the fourth Gospel. In that epistle he says: “I have no delight in corruptible food nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of *Jesus Christ the Son of God*, who became afterwards of the seed of *David and Abraham*; and I desire the drink

of God, namely, His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life.”¹ These words are evidently taken from John, vi. 32, 48, 51, 54; and if we compare them with what is stated in these verses, we can hardly fail to see that Ignatius was acquainted with John’s Gospel; and if so, then John’s Gospel must have existed in his time. The author of ‘Supernatural Religion’ says: “Scholten has pointed out that the reference to Jesus as ‘born of the seed of David and Abraham’ is not in the spirit of the fourth Gospel; and the use of *πομα θεοῦ* for the *ποσις* of John, vi. 55, and *ἀένναος ζωῇ* instead of *ζωῇ αἰωνιος* are also opposed to the connection with that Gospel.”² On the other hand, we hold that the reference is so obvious, and the sentiments so similar, as to satisfy us that Ignatius was acquainted with the fourth Gospel. The mere change of a word or use of periphrastic language is no argument to disprove the source of a quotation or allusion, but, in our opinion, is rather evidence of the writer’s familiarity with the question.

There is a passage in another of his epistles—the Epistle to the Philadelphians—which seems to refer to our Gospel. In that epistle Ignatius writes: “For

¹ Ad. Rom. vii.—Οὐχ ἡδομαι τροφῇ φθορᾶς, οὐδὲ ἡδοναῖς τοῦ βίου τούτου· ἔρτον θεοῦ θέλω, ἔρτον οὐράνιον, ἄρτον ζωῆς, ὅς ἐστι σὰρξ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, τοῦ γενομένου ἐν ὑστέρῳ ἐκ σπέρματος Δαβὶδ· καὶ πῶμα θεοῦ θέλω, τὸ αἷμα αὐτοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀγάπη ἀφθαρτος καὶ ἀένναος ζωῆς.

² Sup. Relig., ii. 261.

if some would have seduced me according to the flesh, yet the spirit is not seduced, being from God, for it knoweth whence it cometh and whither it goeth, and detects the secrets.”¹ The words in the fourth Gospel to which we believe these are an allusion, or of which they are a paraphrase, are the following: “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the spirit.”² The author of ‘Supernatural Religion’ sees no proof in the words of Ignatius that he made any use of the fourth Gospel, or was acquainted with it. To us, however, the words appear to be directly traceable to that Gospel. The conclusion which is forced upon us is, that the allusions in these Epistles of Ignatius to John’s Gospel are so apparent and direct as to be unmistakable, and consequently that Ignatius was acquainted with the Gospel, and that therefore it was in existence in his time, or about 100 A.D.

In opposition to this conclusion, Mr Tayler writes: “There is no clear and certain reference” in these Epistles “to the fourth Gospel. The style far more resembles that of Paul than of John. The Epistles of

¹ Ad. Phil. vii.—Εἰ γὰρ, κατὰ σάρκα μέτινες ἠθέλησαν πλανῆσαι, ἀλλὰ τὸ πνεῦμα οὐ πλανᾶται, ἀπὸ θεοῦ ὄν· οἶδεν γὰρ πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ ποῦ ὑπάγει, καὶ τὰ κρυπτὰ ἐλέγχει.

² John, iii. 8.—Τὸ πνεῦμα ὅπου θέλει πνεῖ, καὶ τὴν φωνὴν αὐτοῦ ἀκούεις, ἀλλ’ οὐκ οἶδας πόθεν ἔρχεται καὶ τοῦ ὑπάγει· οὕτως ἐστὶ πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος. κ.τ.λ.

the former seem evidently to have been the model, in the same way as the author of the martyrdom of Ignatius has clearly had in his eye the account of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem, contained in Acts, xx., xxi. Peter and Paul are mentioned by name (Romans, xlviii.), but John not once—not even in the Epistle to the Ephesians. The style and sentiment of these three Epistles, found in the Syriac MS., which Cureton and Bunsen regarded as a great discovery, seem to me very weak and puerile.”¹ The reasoning of Mr Tayler in this quotation seems to us loose and illogical. It is no argument against our conclusion—that the quotation is from John—to allege that the style of the Syriac Epistles is more Pauline than Johannine. Though Ignatius was acquainted with Paul's writings, and though it may be true that he adopted them as the model of his own, it by no means follows that there are no references to or quotations from the Gospel of John in the writings of Ignatius. It might as well be argued on the same grounds as those on which Mr Tayler founds his argument, that there is no reference to the Epistles of Paul, and that the style resembles that of John rather than that of Paul. It seems to us that the objections of Mr Tayler are not well founded, and that the way in which he seeks to escape from the obvious reference is, to use his own words, “weak and puerile.”

We do not forget that in the opinion of some writers

¹ *An Attempt, &c.*, p. 56.

the Epistles of Ignatius are not authentic, and are of no importance in this discussion. Mr Tayler in his treatise says: "Such extreme uncertainty attaches to the origin and authorship of the so-called Epistles of Ignatius, that no reliable use can be made of them in the present inquiry. They exist, it is well known, in three distinct forms, the mutual relations of which are still very obscure. Were they genuine, they would carry us back to the reign of Trajan, 98-117 A.D. But any one at all acquainted with the Ignatian controversy would be inclined to infer from allusions in these Epistles to the fourth Gospel, rather the lateness of the Epistles than the early origin of the Gospel. In the three Epistles to Polycarp, the Ephesians, and the Romans, which have recently been recovered in a very brief form from the Syriac, and which are considered by Dr Cureton, the translator, and the late Baron Bunsen, to exhibit the genuine nucleus of the posterior, amplified edition, there is no clear and certain reference to the fourth Gospel."¹ The author of 'Supernatural Religion' is equally averse to the admission of the Ignatian Epistles. He tells us that "the whole of the Ignatian literature is a mass of falsification and fraud."² And again, "We must go further, and assert that none of the Epistles have any value as evidence for an earlier period than the end of the second or beginning of the third century, even if they have any value at all."³ The "three distinct forms" in which

¹ An Attempt, &c., p. 56.

² Sup. Relig., i. 269.

³ Ibid., i. 274.

the Epistles of Ignatius exist are: 1. The Long Recension. This recension, which exists both in the Greek original and in a Latin translation, is confessedly not authentic, and may be set aside as of no value in the discussion. 2. The Seven Epistles which Eusebius had before him, and which are addressed to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Trallians, the Romans, the Philadelphians, the Smyrnæans, and Polycarp. These Epistles are commonly known as the Vossian, from the fact that they were discovered in the Greek original by Isaac Voss about the middle of the seventeenth century. And, 3. The Syriac Epistles, which are those to the Ephesians, the Romans, and Polycarp, and which were discovered among the Nitrian MSS. in the British Museum, and published in 1845 by Cureton, and are hence called the Curetonian Epistles. The genuineness of these Epistles has been established by what appears to be sufficient evidence. Baron Bunsen, among others, has fully discussed this question, and has shown satisfactorily that these three Epistles, which he designates the immortal Epistles of Ignatius, are genuine Epistles of that Father.

But while we accept the verdict of Bunsen as to the genuineness of the Curetonian Epistles, we are not to be understood as giving up the genuineness of the Vossian. On the contrary, the reasons which Canon Lightfoot assigns for his belief that they are genuine seem to us conclusive, and may be briefly stated thus: That the investigations of Petermann into the Armenian

version, and its relation to a pre-existing Syriac version, make it probable that the Curetonian letters are excerpts of the Vossian version.—That the internal evidence which the Curetonian letters furnish shows that they exist, if not in a mutilated, certainly in an incomplete form.—Some of the letters in their present shape are brought to an abrupt termination, and this leads us to suppose that the author brought them to a more extended conclusion.—That though there are many historical circumstances of an ecclesiastical and personal character introduced into the Vossian letters which do not appear in the Curetonian, there are no contradictions between them.—On the contrary, it would almost appear that these circumstances are required to complete the Curetonian form.—That the anachronisms which in the opinion of objectors are to be found in these Epistles disappear on further investigation. For these reasons Lightfoot accepts the testimony of the Vossian Epistles, and assigns their date to a period not later than the middle of the second century, and seems to be satisfied that they are the genuine productions of Ignatius.¹ With these reasons we entirely concur, and have little hesitation in accepting the testimony of Ignatius in proof of the early existence of our Gospel, of his acquaintance with its contents, and of his recognition of it as an apostolic work.

Polycarp, our next witness, was Bishop of Smyrna,

¹ Contem. Rev., 1875.

and suffered martyrdom about the middle of the second century. He was about eighty-six years of age at the time of his martyrdom, and consequently was the contemporary and also, it is said, the disciple of John. Of his writings there is only one short epistle left—the Epistle to the Philippians, which was written about the year 115 A.D. In that epistle there is a clear reference to the First Epistle of John. He says, “For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is Antichrist.”¹ Now, if we compare these words with what is said in 1 John, iv. 3,—“And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world,”²—we can hardly fail to see their strong resemblance, and to be satisfied that Polycarp was acquainted with the First Epistle of John. It is generally admitted, however, that the fourth Gospel and the First Epistle are by the same author; and one can hardly imagine that Polycarp, whose connection with John is believed to have been so close and intimate, could know the First Epistle without also being acquainted with the fourth Gospel. “To recognise the Epistle, we must also recognise the Gospel.” The tes-

¹ Ad. Phil. c. vii.—Πᾶς γὰρ, ὃς ἂν μὴ ὁμολογῇ, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθέναι, ἀντίχριστος ἐστὶ.

² 1 John, iv. 3.—Καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἔστι· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν ἤδη.

timony of Polycarp, therefore, is of great importance in the discussion, and possesses very considerable value. The writers of the Tübingen school are aware of this, and they have sought in every conceivable way to throw suspicion on his testimony. They argue that "it is not absolutely necessary to take these words of Polycarp as a quotation from St John," and that "they may have been sentiments . . . which John may have gathered up as well as Polycarp without pretending to have first originated them." One of this school, Volkmar, has gone further, and has put the question, "Can we not reverse the argument, and say that it is the author of the so-called Epistles of John who quotes Polycarp?"¹ This insinuation of Volkmar is a desperate effort to escape from a difficulty, and shows us to what extremities those will betake themselves who are resolved to adhere to and uphold a foregone conclusion. The author of 'Supernatural Religion' partially adopts Volkmar's views, and says: "This passage does not occur as a quotation, and the utmost that can be said of the few words with which it opens is that a phrase somewhat resembling, but at the same time materially differing from, the Epistle of John, is interwoven with the text of the Epistle to the Philippians. If this were really a quotation from the canonical Epistle, it would indeed be singular that, considering the supposed relations of Polycarp and John, the name of the apostle

¹ Der Ursprung unserer Evangelien nach den Urkunden, p. 47.

should not have been mentioned, and a quotation have been distinctly and correctly made. On the other hand, there is no earlier trace of the canonical Epistle, and, as Volkmar argues, it may well be doubted whether it may not rather be dependent on the Epistle to the Philippians, than the latter upon the Epistle of John.”¹ The author then enters further into detail, and mainly acquiesces with Scholten in the opinion that neither Epistle is dependent upon the other, and that each has adopted a formula which was current against various heresies in the early Church. He further thinks that the writers refer to different classes of heretics; and that whilst Polycarp opposes those who deny that Christ had a human body, John opposes those who deny that Jesus had a divine nature. He is by no means certain that Polycarp’s Epistle is an authentic work, and contends that, even if partly genuine, it cannot be dated earlier than the last years of that Father; and that therefore the admission that Polycarp made use of the First Epistle of John can be of no value for the fourth Gospel.

If the quotation and the summary which we have given of this author’s opinions prove anything, it is that they are little better than a tissue of assertions. They show us how far the writers of this school will go to support a theory which they have resolved to defend, and which they stick to, no matter how much

¹ Sup. Relig., ii. 268.

it may be contradicted by the facts that are brought to bear against it.

Though it may not be necessary to take up these statements *seriatim*, and reply to them in detail, yet there are some of them which we deem it proper to notice. First of all, the mere fact that Polycarp does not mention John's name in the passage is no reason for asserting that it could not be a quotation from his Epistle. So far from this system of quotation being "singular," nothing is more common in the early Fathers than non-citation, or a quotation without naming the writer from whom the words are taken. If the work had been recently published, and therefore little known, it was less likely that the name of the writer would be given; and hence we find that the first express citations are from St Paul's Epistles, which were the earliest New Testament writings. Another remark we think it imperative to advance is, that the belief of Scholten, with whom the author of 'Supernatural Religion' agrees, that "neither is dependent on the other, and that both adopted a formula in use in the early Church against various heresies," is destitute of any foundation. It is a gratuitous assumption, and has, so far as we have been able to discover, not a single proof to support it. Then with regard to the assertion that "the writers refer to different classes of heretics," there is no evidence to substantiate it. Polycarp, in the allusions to John's

Epistle in the passage referred to, condemns the same false teachers whom John condemns, and in almost the identical words of John. The allusion is all the more significant, and the inference all the more important, from the fact that the word Antichrist is not met with in the writings of any of the early Fathers, except in those of John's own disciples—Polycarp and Irenæus. Then, again, the author of 'Supernatural Religion' asserts that there is "strong reason" to doubt the authenticity of the Epistle of Polycarp; that even if it were genuine, it cannot be dated "earlier than the last years of the Father," and that it is apparent that "the use of the First Epistle of John could not be of value for the fourth Gospel, of which the writing does not show a trace." Now, in answer, let it be remarked that Irenæus, the disciple of Polycarp, believed in its genuineness, and that by competent critics its date has been fixed to be about 115 A.D. Then, it is unfair to allege that Polycarp's Epistle is of little value in the discussion regarding the authorship and authenticity of the fourth Gospel, and the desire of the author of 'Supernatural Religion' to press this view upon us shows that he is aware of this fact. It is all but universally admitted, and no one knows this better than the author of 'Supernatural Religion,' that from the similarity of their style and phraseology, as well as the harmony of their sentiments, the First Epistle of John and the fourth Gospel owe their origin to one and the same

author; and therefore the use of the First Epistle of John in Polycarp's letter is, as we have endeavoured to show, of great value for the fourth Gospel.

Papias, to whom we shall next refer, was Bishop of Hierapolis, near Colosse, and died by martyrdom about 163 A.D. He was the contemporary and friend of Polycarp, and, according to Irenæus, was a hearer of the Apostle John, though Eusebius doubts this. There is much stress laid upon the testimony of Papias, and both those who argue for and those who argue against the genuineness of the fourth Gospel appeal to him for support. It is not denied that, so far as we have any record of his writings in Eusebius, Papias makes no mention of our Gospel; but it is too sweeping an inference from this that he was not acquainted with it, and made no use of it. It seems to us that too much has been inferred from this silence by the Tübingen school, and that they have argued too strongly from it against the genuineness of the fourth Gospel. Zeller, for instance, says, "The silence of Papias will always afford conclusive evidence against the authenticity of the Gospel of John." Hilgenfeld: "Had Papias said the least thing respecting a Gospel of John, Eusebius could not possibly have overlooked it; and as he examined into the works transmitted by John, he could not have kept silence had there existed a written Gospel from his hand." Strauss: "The silence of Papias respecting John as the author of this Gospel is the more weighty, in that he

not only expressly assures us that he has carefully looked into what was left behind by John, but that, as the Bishop of Asia Minor and an acquaintance of Polycarp, the disciple of John, he would consequently know something more definitely respecting the apostle, who spent his latter years in Ephesus." Renan: "Papias . . . says not a word of a 'Life of Jesus' written by John, although he had zealously collected the oral narratives of both Aristion and John the Presbyter. If any such mention had been found in his work, Eusebius, who points out everything therein that can contribute to the literary history of the apostolic age, would doubtless have mentioned it." Volkmar: "We may therefore certainly presuppose that, had Eusebius found a trace of the use of the anti-chilastic Gospel of Papias, he would all the more eagerly have brought it out;" and this opinion is preceded by the remark that "Papias edited his collection and interpretation of the Lord's prophecies about the year 167 of our era."¹

But the supposed silence of Papias proves nothing against our Gospel. If his object had been to establish the authorship of the Gospels, or to advocate their authenticity, the argument from silence, supposing it could be proved that Papias in his writings makes no mention of our Gospel, would have been entitled to consideration. But it was no part of his plan to do this. Nor is there any reason to think that it was

¹ Tischendorf, *Origin of the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 279, 280.

necessary. The genuineness of the Gospels was acknowledged, and no testimony was needed on the point. It is maintained, however, that Papias was ignorant of the existence of the fourth Gospel, and that if he had been acquainted with it, he would certainly have made some reference to it. It is argued that his silence is strongly evidential that the Gospel did not exist in his day, and is not, therefore, an apostolic production. There is confirmation of this, it is alleged, in the fact that Papias resided in the neighbourhood of Ephesus, where John's Gospel is believed to have been written, and that his work could not have made its appearance before the middle of the second century. It seems to us, however, that the objection drawn from the silence of Papias is an unfair one, and cannot be rightly maintained. This will appear if we bear in mind, first of all, that Papias did not undertake to give evidence in favour of the genuineness of John's Gospel; and secondly, that though there is nothing in the extracts given by Eusebius from Papias's book, showing his acquaintance with John's Gospel, it by no means follows that in other parts of his writings not given by Eusebius there is no mention of that Gospel. It is no answer to this to say that Eusebius has cited sayings from Papias, showing his acquaintance with Matthew and Mark, inasmuch as these sayings are not cited to prove the genuineness of these Gospels. They were cited "in consequence of certain facts which they touch

upon ;” and the only inference we can draw from the silence of Eusebius in the case of John is, “that there were no circumstances which made it necessary to cite what related to him.” This silence of Eusebius, on which the objectors found so much, we have discussed in a separate section. But though Papias is silent—so far as Eusebius represents him—regarding the Gospel of John, he bears testimony of an important character which inferentially is evidence of his acquaintance with our Gospel. Eusebius says that “Papias brought testimony out of the First Epistle of John”¹ Now it is admitted, as we have already said, that the Epistle and the Gospel were the work of the same author. Mr Tayler says: “There is the highest probability that the fourth Gospel and the first Epistle were written by the same hand.” If, then, Papias knew that the first Epistle was by John, there is the highest probability that he knew that the fourth Gospel was also by John. Mr Tayler no doubt replies that the language of Eusebius furnishes no certain proof that Papias knew the Apostle John to be the author of the Epistle; but though it may not amount to certain proof, it amounts to the strongest probability. But whether Papias knew that John was the author of the first Epistle or not, yet if the first Epistle was by the same author as the fourth Gospel, as Mr Tayler admits, and if the first Epistle

¹ H. E., iii. 39.—*Κέχρηται δ' ὁ αὐτός μαρτυρίας ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰωάννου προτέρας ἐπιστολῆς.*

was in existence in the time of Papias, it follows that the fourth Gospel was also in existence; or, in other words, that both were in existence and in circulation not later than the middle of the second century.

If we consult the writings of Papias, or those portions of them which have been preserved to us by Eusebius, we may arrive at an explanation why the Gospels were not cited or quoted in the works of the early Fathers. It appears from these fragmentary passages, that at the time the Gospels began to be circulated, those who interested themselves in seeking information regarding the life of Christ and the labours of His apostles, preferred to receive it from the lips of their contemporaries rather than from the records of the inspired penmen. In illustration of this preference, Papias says: "If at any time I met with one who had conversed with the elders, I inquired after the sayings of the elders; what Andrew or what Peter said; or what Philip, what Thomas, or James had said; what John or Matthew, or what any other of the disciples of the Lord, were wont to say; and what Aristion or John the Presbyter, disciples of the Lord, say."¹ Eusebius, commenting on this quotation, points out that "Papias twice mentions the name of John; the former of which

¹ H. E., iii. 39.—*Εἰ δὲ ποῦ καὶ παρηκολουθηκώς τις τοῖς πρεσβυτέροις ἔλθοι, τοὺς τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἀνέκρινον λόγους. Τί Ἀνδρέας ἢ τί Πέτρος εἶπεν ἢ τί Φίλιππος, ἢ τί Θωμᾶς, ἢ Ἰακώβος· ἢ τί Ἰωάννης, ἢ Ματθαῖος· ἢ τις ἕτερος τῶν τοῦ Κυρίου μαθητῶν, ἃ τε Ἀριστίων καὶ ὁ πρεσβύτερος Ἰωάννης, οἱ τοῦ Κυρίου μαθηταὶ λέγουσιν.*

he reckons with Peter, James, Matthew, and the rest of the apostles, manifestly intending the evangelist. Then, making a distinction in his discourse, he places the other John with the others, who are not of the number of the apostles, putting Aristion before him—and he expressly calls him Presbyter; by which, too" (Eusebius adds), "is shown the truth of their account who have said that there were two in Asia of that name, and that there were two sepulchres at Ephesus, and that each of them is still said to be the sepulchre of John. This is worthy of our remark; for it is likely that the Revelation, which goes under the name of John, was seen by the second, if not by the first. Papias then confesseth that he received the apostles' sayings from those who conversed with them, and says that he was a hearer of Aristion and John the Presbyter; and, indeed, he often mentions them by name, and puts down in his writings the traditions he had received from them."¹

It is no doubt true that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark are mentioned by Papias, and that he makes no mention of those of Luke and John; and the adherents of the Tübingen school infer from this silence that, so far as the writings of Papias are concerned, they inferentially afford evidence against the existence of these latter Gospels. If, however, we consider the object

¹ H. E., iii. 39.—"Ενθα καὶ ἐπιστῆσαι ἄξιον δις καταριθμοῦντι αὐτῷ τὸ Ἰωάννου ὄνομα· ὧν τὸν μὲν πρότερον Πέτρον καὶ Ἰακώβον καὶ Ματθαίον καὶ τοῖς λοιποῖς ἀποστόλοις συγκαταλέγει, σαφῶς δηλῶν τὸν ἐναγγελιστὴν· κ.τ.λ.

which John the Presbyter, from whom Papias received his information regarding the authorship of the four Gospels, had in view, we will see that the inference of the Tübingen school is not supported. The object of the Presbyter was not to inform Papias what Gospels were in existence at the time, but to show him to what extent the authorship of Matthew and Mark was affected by the fact that Mark wrote under the dictation of Peter, and Matthew in the Hebrew tongue. Upon a fair and candid consideration of the writings of Papias as we have them in Eusebius, it may not be possible to gather from his testimony conclusive evidence as to the genuineness of the fourth Gospel; but it is safe to hold that while the silence of Papias is no argument against our Gospel, his testimony from the first Epistle is presumptive evidence that he was acquainted with the Gospel also, as both works are confessedly by the same hand.

Though in the preceding remarks we have argued upon the assumption that in the fragments of Papias preserved to us in the works of Eusebius there is no trace of his acquaintance with the fourth Gospel, it is not to be inferred that we admit that the assumption is unchallengeable. On the contrary, there is good reason to dispute the assumption, and to maintain that the fragments of Papias furnish us with something like evidence that John's Gospel was in his possession, and was made use of by him. If we

shall be able to present anything like presumptive proof of this, it will to a large extent, if not wholly, undermine the argument from the alleged silence of Papias, on which so much stress is placed by Strauss, Baur, Renan, and others of their school. In the first place, the expression which Papias makes use of—"The commandments given to the faith by the Lord, and which come to us from the Truth itself"¹—seems to have a Johannine relationship, and to have its source in John, xiv. 6, where Christ says, "I am the truth." The language bears a manifest resemblance to that of the fourth Gospel, and seemingly directs us to it as its fountain and origin. If so, then it follows that Papias had a knowledge of that Gospel, and that it existed in his time.

Then, again, in the account which Papias gives of the apostles in his preface, and which we have already quoted, it is important to observe that he places them in the same order in which they are mentioned in the fourth Gospel. According to this order, he names Andrew before Peter, which is not done by the Synop-
tists, who always mention Peter first (Matt. iv. 18, x. 2; Mark, i. 11, iii. 17). It seems from this that the list of apostles as given by Papias indicates an acquaintance with the fourth Gospel—the only Gospel that mentions the apostles in the same order. But more than this—it is worthy of notice that not only

¹ H. E., iii. 39.

does Andrew find a prominent place in our Gospel, but so also do Philip and Thomas, who are never mentioned in the Synoptic narratives, except in their lists of the apostolic company. The frequency with which these three apostles are mentioned in the fourth Gospel, and the important part which they sustained in the earthly ministry of our Lord, will be apparent on referring to the following passages: i. 41, 44; vi. 5, 8; xi. 16; xii. 21, 22; xiv. 5, 8; xx. 24. Now it is remarkable that these are the very apostles to whom Papias assigns in his preface a leading place; and it is fair to argue that he did so according to an arrangement, not of accident, but of authority—that authority being the Gospel according to St John. If so, the conclusion is inevitable that John's Gospel was in his hands at the time he wrote.

The last reason we shall give for our belief that Papias was acquainted with the fourth Gospel is derived from the testimony of an anonymous writer. If this testimony could be accepted as a reliable and an unquestionable authority, it would at once dispose of the argument which has been founded on the alleged silence of Papias. That testimony is found in a Latin manuscript of the Gospels, or rather in a prefix or prologue to the manuscript, and is as follows: "The Gospel of John was made known and given to the Churches by John while he yet remained in the body, as Papias of Hierapolis, a dear disciple of John's, has related in

his exoteric (or exegetical) books—that is, in the last five books. He, indeed, wrote the Gospel down, John dictating correctly.”¹ This manuscript is believed to belong to the ninth century, but the preface, according to Tischendorf, dates earlier than the time of Jerome. This testimony, which we hold to be important, was first published by Cardinal Thomasius in 1747, subsequently by Aberle in 1864, and latterly by Tischendorf in 1866. The argument which this preface furnishes is, in our opinion, of considerable value in the discussion. If it be argued by our opponents that the testimony of the document is not trustworthy, we may surely maintain that it shows us that, in the opinion of the early Church, Papias had an intimate connection with the Gospel of John; and it may be that, in the lapse of years, further and fuller testimony may be discovered to confirm the acquaintanceship which we have endeavoured to establish. There are other testimonies of a similar import—one from Irenæus,² another in Corderius’s *Catena*;³ but as we cannot base upon these any certain conclusions, we think it unnecessary to notice them at greater length.

¹ *Evangelium Johannis manifestatum, et datum est ecclesiis ab Johanne adhuc in corpore constituto sicut Papias nomine Hierapolitanus discipulus Johannis carus in exotericis (Hilgenfeld, exegeticis)—i.e., in extremis quinque libris retulit. Descripsit vero evangelium dictante Johanne recte.—Vatic.; Alex., No. 14; Tischendorf, Wannurden, &c., 1866.*

² *Adv. Hær., V. xxxvi. 2.*

³ *Catena Patrum Græcorum, &c., Introd., 1630.*

Hippolytus, our next witness, is believed to have been Bishop of Portus, near Rome, and to have suffered martyrdom in the early part of the third century. His work, 'Refutation of all Heresies,' was for a time ascribed to Origen; but, through the labours of Baron Bunsen and others, it has been satisfactorily established that Hippolytus was the author. His testimony is very important. It shows that Basilides, who flourished at Alexandria under Hadrian, 117-138 A.D., was acquainted with the fourth Gospel. There are two quotations which Hippolytus gives from a work of Basilides, and which are evidently from John's Gospel. One is—"And this," he says, "is what is spoken in the Gospels: 'He was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'"¹ The second is—"And each thing," says he, "has its own particular times, the mighty Saviour testifying, 'Mine hour is not yet come.'"² The first passage is evidently an exact quotation of John, i. 9—"That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world;" and the second is no less an exact quotation of John, ii. 4—"Mine hour is not yet come;" and together they lead to the conclusion that Basilides quotes from John, and was acquainted with his Gospel. It follows

¹ Hippolytus, vii. 10.—Καὶ τοῦτο, φησὶν, ἔστι τὸ λεγόμενον ἐν τοῖς εὐαγγελίοις· ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

² Ibid., vii. 15.—Ὅτι δὲ, φησὶν, ἕκαστον ἰδίους ἔχει καιροῦς ἱκανὸν ὁ σωτὴρ λέγων· οὐπω ἤκει ἡ ὥρα μου.

from this that John's Gospel existed in the time of Basilides, or in the early part of the second century. Mr Tayler in his treatise, in referring to this, says: "Bunsen thought it furnished conclusive evidence of the authenticity of John's Gospel, as showing that Basilides, who flourished at Alexandria in the reign of Hadrian 117-138 A.D., wrote a commentary on it. In answer to those who argued that the references in Hippolytus did not apply to Basilides himself, but to his followers, and did not, therefore, establish so early a date, he insisted that the constant use in the citations of the singular verb 'says' (*φησὶ*), was a clear indication that Basilides and nobody else could have been meant."¹ Mr Tayler attempts to reply to this argument, but his attempt must be pronounced a failure. He seems to feel this, and says: "Should we admit this reasoning, it would prove, no doubt, that the fourth Gospel existed between 117 and 138 A.D., but we should still be left without any witness from Hippolytus as to its author. For it is a curious fact that, throughout his work, notwithstanding numerous and unquestionable references to the fourth Gospel, the name of John is never mentioned but once, and then as the author of the Apocalypse (vii. 36)."² The author of 'Supernatural Religion' repeats the same objection, and says: "As we have already stated, however, none of the quotations which we have considered

¹ *An Attempt*, &c., p. 57.

² *Ibid.*, p. 57.

are directly referred to Basilides himself, but they are all introduced by the utterly vague expression, 'he says' (*φησί*), without any subject accompanying the verb. Now it is admitted that writers of the time of Hippolytus, and notably Hippolytus himself, made use of the name of the founder of a sect to represent the whole of his school. . . . The fact probably is, that Hippolytus derived his views of the doctrines of Basilides from the writings of his later followers, and from them made the quotations which are attributed to the founder of the school. In any case there is no ground for referring these quotations with an indefinite *φησί* to Basilides himself." ¹ Then in examining the quotations which we have given above as from Basilides, and which are directly traceable to the fourth Gospel, he says: "We have shown that Hippolytus and other writers of his time were in the habit of quoting, indifferently, passages from works by the founders of sects and by their later followers without any distinction, an utterly vague *φησί* doing service equally for all. This is the case in the present instance, and there is no legitimate reason for assigning these passages to Basilides himself, but, on the contrary, many considerations which forbid our doing so, which we have elsewhere detailed." ²

It is in this way that the evidence of our Gospel's existence in the time of Basilides is disposed of by

¹ Sup. Relig., pp. 52-54.

² Ibid., p. 371.

this author, and members of the Tübingen school. But statements like these will have no weight with the unprejudiced inquirer. It will require much stronger evidence than any we have yet met with, to satisfy us that Hippolytus ascribed to Basilides, who lived in the reign of Hadrian, what had been said by some of his followers long years after. The words of Mr Matthew Arnold, in reply to those who allege that Hippolytus mixes up the deliverances of the founder of a school with those of his followers, are admirably put, and fully dispose of the objection. "It is not true," he says, "that the author of the '*Philosophoumena*'—*i. e.*, the work of Hippolytus—habitually wields the *subjectless he says* in the random manner alleged, with no other formula for quotation, both from the master and from the followers. In general, he uses the formula *according to them*¹ when he quotes from the school, and the formula *he says*² when he gives the dicta of the master. And in this particular case he manifestly quotes the dicta of Basilides, and no one who had not a theory to serve would ever dream of doubting it. Basilides, therefore, about the year 125 of our era, had before him the fourth Gospel."³

It is then, we think, sufficiently established that Basilides, 117-138 A.D., was acquainted with our Gospel, and the passages from his work which we have given above are evidently quotations from it. It matters

¹ Κατ' αὐτοὺς.

² Φησί.

³ God and the Bible, p. 269.

little that there is no mention in these quotations of their author's name. The absence of citation does not prove that the author was not known to Basilides, while the references to the fourth Gospel are ample testimony that it was in existence in his time—that is, in the early part of the second century.

The 'Epistle to Diognetus,' to which we shall next turn for evidence, has unmistakable references to John's Gospel. The authorship of this Epistle has been a matter of dispute. It was long ascribed to Justin Martyr, but it is now generally agreed that the author is unknown. It is supposed to have been written about the time of Justin, though the author of 'Supernatural Religion' doubts this, and alleges that it is "neither quoted nor mentioned by any ancient writer"—that "there is no external evidence whatever to indicate the period of its composition"—that "it is not only anonymous, but incomplete"—that "it is assigned to various periods between about the end of the first quarter of the second century and the end of that century; whilst others altogether denounce it as a modern forgery," and that it is only "found in a single MS. of the thirteenth or fourteenth century."¹

In reply, it may be sufficient to say that it is no objection either to the genuineness or the antiquity of a document that "it is only found in a single manuscript" of a subsequent century. It is well known that several

¹ Sup. Relig., pp. 38-40.

of the classics—and these not the least valued—have been handed down to us in a single manuscript, and they have not on this account been rejected, or their dates and authorship called in question. Notably some of Cicero's speeches belong to this class, and exist only in a single manuscript of no very great antiquity.

The periods to which this Epistle has been assigned are not so wide apart as the author of 'Supernatural Religion' would wish us to believe; and so far as we have been able to discover, no one has ventured to allege that it is a "modern forgery." The dates to which it has been assigned are as follows: Westcott on the Canon gives 117 A.D.; Ewald, whose independent criticism has given him so important a position, assigns it to 120-130; Bunsen, whose researches have thrown so much light on Biblical questions, fixes 135; Credner gives 140; Davidson about 180; Scholten 170; while Hilgenfeld excludes it from the second century. It seems to us, from a consideration of these authorities, that we cannot err materially if we fix the date of its composition, as Ewald gives it, at 120-130 A.D.

Now in this Epistle there are references to our Gospel which are most clear and obvious. The sentence, "Christians dwell in the world, but they are not of the world,"¹ is evidently a reference to, or a quotation from, John, xvii. 11, 16, "These are in the world," "They are not of the world." Again, "God sent His own Son

¹ Cap. vi.—Χριστιανοὶ ἐν κόσμῳ οἰκοῦσιν, οὐκ εἰσὶ δὲ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου.

as loving, not condemning,"¹ is obviously a reference to John, iii. 17, "For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." Then again, "For God has loved mankind, . . . to whom He sent His only begotten Son,"² has evidently its foundation in John, iii. 16, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," &c.

The author of 'Supernatural Religion' attempts to show that "this anonymous work could do nothing towards establishing the apostolic origin and historical character of the fourth Gospel;" and argues that these allusions have a Pauline rather than a Johannine source. He writes: "Now the passages pointed out as references to the fourth Gospel distinctly differ from the parallels in the Gospel, and it seems to us clear that they arise naturally out of the antithetical manner which the writer adopts from the Epistles of Paul, and are based upon passages in those Epistles closely allied to them in sense and also in language."³

It may be that there are references to Paul's Epistles in this Epistle; but it is obvious at a glance, to give one specimen, that the words, "God sent His own Son as loving, not condemning," are derived from the fourth Gospel. They have manifestly their source in John, iii.

¹ Cap. vii.—Ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐπεμψεν ὡς ἀγαπῶν, οὐ κρίνων.

² Cap. x.—Ὁ γὰρ Θεὸς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἠγάπησεν . . . πρὸς οὓς ἀπέστειλε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ.

³ Sup. Relig., p. 360.

17, and they furnish strong testimony in favour of "the apostolic origin and historical character of the fourth Gospel." Even Mr Tayler admits this, and says that "the first, and probably the original, portion of the beautiful Epistle to Diognetus, is deeply imbued with Johannine thought."

Justin Martyr, our next witness, was born at Flavia Neapolis, anciently called Sichem, a city of Samaria, about 103 A.D. His conversion to Christianity is said to have taken place about 133, and his death by martyrdom about 165 A.D., though some fix an earlier date. He was the contemporary for some years of Polycarp and Papias. He travelled in Italy, Egypt, and Asia Minor; and it is alleged that for some time he resided in Ephesus. He was a man of great eminence, and was highly esteemed for his intellectual attainments and his virtuous character. It does not surprise us, therefore, that the opponents of our Gospel admit that the testimony of Justin Martyr is "very important." Let us see, then, what that testimony is.

The works of Justin abound with references to our Gospel, and show his intimate acquaintance with it. The Apologies were written, the first in 138 A.D., and the second in 161 A.D., and the Dialogue with Trypho in the interval; and in these works there are expressions which bear a resemblance more or less close to the language of John's Gospel. In the first Apology, for instance, we find these words, "For Christ also said,

'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven;' now that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs is manifest to all."¹ It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this passage is directly traceable to John, iii. 3-5; and few will fail to recognise the resemblance. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?"² It has been pointed out that while John uses the words *γεννηθη ἄνωθεν* (born from above), Justin has *ἀναγεννηθῆτε* (born again), which is not to be found in John, nor even in the Synoptists; and that Justin has the formula *βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν* (kingdom of heaven), which is that of Matthew, and not *βασιλεία τοῦ Θεοῦ* (kingdom of God), which is that of John as well as of Mark and Luke. But it is worthy of remark, and ought to be mentioned, that Tischendorf adopts in ver. 5 the "kingdom of heaven," on the authority of the Sinaitic MS., in place of "kingdom of God," the received reading. It does not seem to us that this is a material point, or

¹ Cap. 61.—'Ο Χριστὸς εἶπεν· ἂν μὴ ἀναγεννηθῆτε, οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθετε εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τῶν οὐρανῶν· ὅτι δὲ καὶ ἀδύνατον εἰς τὰς μήτρας τῶν τεκνῶν τοὺς πατρὶς γεννωμένους ἐμβῆναι, φανερόν πᾶσιν ἐστίν.

² Ἀπεκρίθη δ' Ἰησοῦς καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ, "Ἄμην ἄμην λέγω σοι, ἐὰν μὴ τις γεννηθῇ ἄνωθεν, οὐ δύναται ἰδεῖν τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ." Λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν δὲ Νικόδημος, "Πῶς δύναται ἄνθρωπος γεννηθῆναι γέρον ὢν; μὴ δύναται εἰς τὴν κοιλίαν τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ δεύτερον εἰσελθεῖν καὶ γεννηθῆναι;"

that in his quotation Justin has violated either taste or custom in giving a paraphrase of it, or in departing from the strictly verbal form of the expression. In all probability he was quoting from memory when he wrote, and was not pretending to quote the *ipsissima verba*; and if so, it is not difficult to understand that he would occasionally use words not exactly the same, but with the same meaning as those he had in his mind at the time he was writing. The slight difference that exists between the precise words in John's Gospel, and those which Justin uses in the passage under consideration, seems to indicate, not Justin's ignorance of, but rather his intimate acquaintance with, the words of Christ, as recorded by John. What Justin aimed at, apparently, was to give not so much the language as the doctrine of the passage.

Then, in his Dialogue with Trypho, Justin says: "Since His" (Christ's) "blood did not spring from the seed of man, but from the will of God."¹ These words obviously resemble John, i. 13: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."² On comparing these passages, and considering their respective meanings, it will not be easy to mistake the resemblance and relationship. It has, indeed, been alleged that the quotation from

¹ Dialog. cum Trypho, cap. 63.—'Ὡς τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἐξ ἀνθρωπίου σπέρματος γεγεννημένου, ἀλλ' ἐκ θελήματος Θεοῦ.

² Οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς, οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ Θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

Justin has no reference to our Gospel, but we venture to think that none will say so except those who have some theory to serve.

Again, in the Dialogue John the Baptist is represented as saying, when men supposed him to be the Christ, "I am not the Christ, but the voice of one crying."¹ The confession of the Baptist that he was not the Christ, but merely "the voice of one crying," is found nowhere but in the fourth Gospel, and therefore could have been taken only from it. The corresponding words in the fourth Gospel are: "And he confessed, and denied not. . . . He said, 'I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness.'"²

The last instance we shall give of allusions in Justin's works to the Gospel of John, is one which we think fully establishes Justin's acquaintance with our Gospel. The passage in John which Justin quotes is the following: "They shall look upon Him whom they have pierced,"³ a passage which is obviously taken from Zechariah, xii. 10. The apostle in these words does not quote from the Septuagint version,⁴ but gives a translation of his own wholly different from that of the

¹ Dialog. cum Trypho, cap. 88.—Οἱ ἄνθρωποι ὑπελάμβανον αὐτὸν εἶναι τὸν Χριστόν. Πρὸς οὓς καὶ αὐτὸς ἐβόα· οὐκ εἰμι ὁ Χριστὸς, ἀλλὰ φωνὴ βοῶντος.

² John, i. 20-23.—Καὶ ὁμολόγησε, καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο. . . . "Ἐφη, "Ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ."

³ John, xix. 37.—"Οψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν.

⁴ LXX.—'Επιβλέψονται πρὸς με ἄνθ' ὧν κατωρχήσαντο. Other readings of LXX.—'Επιβλέψονται πρὸς με εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν.

Septuagint. Justin repeats the same passage, and gives it in John's words.¹ One would think that this fact proves sufficiently the origin of Justin's quotation. But Dr Davidson seeks to evade this conclusion by supposing that both John and Justin took the words from Revelation, i. 7.² If, however, we compare the words in the different versions, it will be seen that in Justin's translation there is not a single word, save the last, the same as in Revelation, while it is verbatim what we have in John's Gospel. It is clear, therefore, and no one not under prejudice will question, that Justin made his quotation from our Gospel, and was intimately acquainted with it.

Grouping all these allusions together, and taking an impartial view of them, it is impossible, we think, not to be struck with their Johannine character, and to feel that together they furnish sufficient evidence that the author was acquainted with the fourth Gospel, and that it was a well-known and authoritative work in his day. The estimate which Dr Davidson made of these allusions—the conclusion to which they led him in his first introduction—is expressed without hesitation, and, we think, with soundness. "Whatever vagueness," he says, "may attach to his citations from the fourth, and whatever explanations of their origin may be given by Eichhorn, Marsh, or Credner, it is most probable, on

¹ Apol. i. 52.—"Ὁψονται εἰς ὃν ἐξεκέντησαν.

² Rev. i. 7—"Ὁψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς ὀφθαλμὸς, καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν.

the whole, that he was acquainted with our Gospel. He lived, however, at an uncritical time, when it was considered a matter of no moment to quote accurately. Except in long passages, considerable freedom is taken with the original words of the Gospel, a fact which shows us that he did not hold the identical words in great veneration. He combines different passages of the evangelical history, inserts his own expressions, abridges sentences, and adapts to his purpose the written sentiments of the inspired Evangelists.”¹

In commenting upon these quotations, Mr Tayler urges that the similarity between Justin’s words and John’s in no one instance amounts to a literal quotation, and that, on the other hand, the Gospels of Matthew and Luke are cited much more copiously, and with almost literal verbal accuracy. Mr Tayler helps us to reply to his own argument, and admits that a familiar acquaintance with the Gospel may have occasioned the similarity of thought and expression which exists between the Martyr and the Evangelist. But this is all we contend for, and it supplies us with an answer to all the objections which have been advanced against Justin’s evidence. If the words we have given from Justin do not amount to a citation, they come as near to a citation as possible. They bear such a direct resemblance to the fourth Gospel, that the only satisfactory conclusion

¹ Davidson’s *Introd. N.T.*, i. 237.

we can arrive at is that Justin Martyr knew this Gospel, and that in his account of regeneration he adopted the language used by Christ in His conversation with Nicodemus, which is recorded only by John. Mr Tayler himself seems not quite sure of his ground, and says: "I do not here lay much stress on the entire omission of the name of John in all those passages which are supposed to refer to the fourth Gospel, because this is a peculiarity common to John with Matthew and Luke; though it is certainly remarkable, that on the only occasion in Justin when the name of the Apostle John is mentioned, it should be where he is expressly quoted as the author of the Apocalypse."¹ It may not be easy to explain why Justin names John as the author of the Apocalypse, and does not mention his name in connection with the Gospel. It is not, however, to be forgotten, that the Apocalypse had been in earlier circulation, and was therefore better known, and consequently more likely to be quoted with the author's name, than a work which had not been so long in circulation, and therefore not so extensively known.

The author of 'Supernatural Religion' enters fully into an examination of those passages which we have given from Justin's works, but he fails to find in them any undoubted allusions to John's Gospel. He finds in Philo, in the Talmud, or in the Old Testament, expres-

¹ An Attempt, &c., p. 63.

sions more akin and analogous to those quotations from Justin than he finds in John's Gospel; and "the inevitable conclusion" at which he arrives is, that "so far from indicating any acquaintance with the fourth Gospel, the writings of Justin not only do not furnish the slightest evidence of its existence, but offer presumptive testimony against its apostolic origin." To most men "the inevitable conclusion" is the very reverse; and it seems to us that if the writings of Justin furnish evidence of anything, it is of the existence of the fourth Gospel, to which they bear in many passages so close a resemblance. The words of Tischendorf are important: "In my opinion there are most cogent reasons for believing that John was read and used by Justin. The delineation of the person of Christ, characteristic of John—as, for example, in the opening of the Gospel, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;' and in verse 14, 'And the Word became flesh,' as well as the general designation of Jesus as the Logos or Word of God—appears unmistakably in not a few passages in Justin; such, for instance, as, 'And Jesus Christ was begotten in a manner wholly peculiar to Himself as the Son of God, while He is also the Word (Logos) of the same.' 'The primeval force (*δύναμις*), after the Father of all and God the Lord, is the Son, the Word (Logos); and I shall show how He through the incarnation (*σαρκοποιηθεὶς*) became man.' 'The Word

(Logos) of God is the Son of the same.' 'As they have not confessed all that belongs to the Logos, which is Christ, they have often uttered what is at variance with itself.' 'Through the Word (Logos) of God, Jesus Christ our Saviour became flesh (*σαρκοποιηθείς*).'¹ . . . It seems to me that the internal connection between both meets the opponents of the authenticity of John's Gospel in no more convincing manner than in showing how the doctrines of John may be culled from the words of Justin."²

The theory that John and Justin consulted the same original, and drew their information from a common source, has found favour in certain quarters. It has been argued that the similarity that exists between the fourth Gospel and the works of Justin is fully explicable on the supposition that they had both consulted the same authority, and circulated through similar statements the prevalent thoughts of their age. It seems to us that this theory has been invented to get rid of a difficulty; it has no historical basis to justify it: it is a mere guess to explain away an obvious similarity; a mere supposition to meet an argument which, to most minds, must seem conclusive. On the whole, it appears to us that the resemblance between the expressions we have quoted from Justin and the words of John furnishes us, to say the least, with a very strong probability, if not with a convincing proof, that Justin quoted from the fourth Gospel.

¹Origin of the Four Gospels, pp. 66-67.

²Ibid. p. 268.

Tatian, whom we shall next name, was the pupil of Justin Martyr, and flourished about 170 A.D. The testimony of Tatian in behalf of the fourth Gospel is very important. In one of his works, his 'Address to the Greeks,' there is very full proof of his acquaintance with our Gospel. In one passage we find these words: "Do not abhor us who have made this attainment, but, repudiating the demons, follow the one God. All things were made by Him, and without Him not one thing was made,"¹ In another: "And this is the meaning of the saying—'The darkness comprehendeth not the light.' . . . The Logos, in truth, is the light of God."² And again, "God is a Spirit."³ These passages are evidently quotations from John's Gospel, which will be apparent on comparing them with the following verses: "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (i. 3).⁴ "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (i. 5).⁵ "God is a spirit" (iv. 24).⁶ If, then, these passages from Tatian are quotations from John's Gospel—and every candid reader

¹ Oratio ad Græcos, c. xix.—Τοιούτους ἡμᾶς ὄντας μὴ ἀποσυγῆτατε, ἀλλὰ παραιτησάμενοι τῶν δαίμονας Θεῷ τῷ μόνῳ ἀτακοιουθήσατε πάντα ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ γέγονε οὐδὲ ἓν.

² Ibid. c. xiii.—Καὶ τοῦτο ἐστὶν ἄρα τὸ εἰρημένον· ἡ σκοτία τὸ φῶς οὐ καταλαμβάνει. . . . Ὁ λόγος μὲν ἐστὶ τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ φῶς.

³ Ibid. c. iv.—Πνεῦμα δὲ Θεός.

⁴ Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ γέγονεν.

⁵ Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

⁶ Πνεῦμα δὲ Θεός.

will admit their source—they prove, that it was a well-known work in 170 A.D.; that its authority was then recognised by the Christian Church; and that Tatian accepted it as a genuine and authentic work. Mr Tayler, whom no one will accuse of undue partiality for our Gospel, admits that there is no doubt of Tatian's acquaintance with it, and says that there are more passages than one abundantly confirmatory of this acquaintance. Baur, though he allows that the quotations we have given are after John's manner, yet thinks it strange that the name of John is not mentioned by Tatian. Be the explanation of this silence or omission what it may, it affords no proof that Tatian was unacquainted with the fourth Gospel, or that it was not an authoritative document in his time.

There is other proof of Tatian's acquaintance with the fourth Gospel, and that proof we find in his 'Diatessaron,' or 'Harmony of the Gospels.' It appears from Eusebius that this Harmony was extensively used; and it is evident from what Theodoret, Bishop of Cyrus in Syria, says, that it was in extensive circulation not only among the followers of Tatian, but also in the Church generally in the beginning of the fifth century. He tells us that he found more than 200 copies of it in use in the Churches, but that, through his agency, they had been laid aside, and our four Gospels used instead. It has indeed

been suggested by Credner and others that Tatian's 'Diatessaron' was an independent Gospel, which he had found, and which, through his influence, was introduced among his sect; but there is no information we have that justifies such a supposition. The very title which the book bears shows us that it was, as Eusebius tells us, a Harmony of the four Gospels. And as there were no other Gospels received by the Church as canonical but the four which we receive, the only inference that can be legitimately or logically drawn is, that the four Gospels of the Harmony were those which have always been accepted by the Christian Church. John's Gospel was one of these; and it is evident, that Tatian had this Gospel in his mind when he wrote these words with which, according to the Syrian writer Bar Salibi, the Harmony began, "In the beginning was the Word" (John, i. 1). But more than this seems to follow. If John's Gospel existed in 170 A.D., and if its authority was recognised at that date, it is obvious that it existed at a considerably earlier period. In this way, and by such reasoning, the date of our Gospel's recognition is thrown back to an early period in the second century.

The author of 'Supernatural Religion,' however, does not admit that the words we have quoted from Tatian prove anything about the fourth Gospel except its existence, and even hints that they may be from a

different Gospel. He says—"The next passage we at once subjoin in contrast with the parallel in the fourth Gospel:—

ORAT. AD GRÆCOS, § xiii.

And this, therefore, is (the meaning of) the saying:

The darkness comprehends not the light.

Καὶ τοῦτο ἔστιν ἄρα τὸ εἰρημέ-
νον· Ἡ σκοτία τὸ φῶς οὐ καταλαμ-
βάνει.

JOHN, i. 5.

And the light shineth in the darkness;

and the darkness comprehended it not.

Καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει,
καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλα-
βεν.

"The source of the 'saying' is not mentioned, and it is evident that, even if it be taken to be a reference to the fourth Gospel, nothing would thereby be proved but the mere existence of the Gospel. 'The saying,' however, is distinctly different in language from the parallel in the Gospel, and it may be from a different Gospel. We have already remarked that Philo calls the Logos 'the Light,' and quoting in a peculiar form Ps. xxvi. 1, 'For the Lord is my light (φῶς) and my Saviour,' he goes on to say that, as the sun divides day and night, so, Moses says, 'God divides light and darkness' (τὸν Θεὸν φῶς καὶ σκότος διατεχνίσαι). When we turn away to things of sense, we use 'another light,' which is in no way different from 'darkness.' The constant use of the same similitude of light and darkness, in the canonical Epistles, shows how current it was in the Church; and nothing is more certain than the fact that

it was neither originated by, nor confined to, the fourth Gospel.”¹

It is in this way that the writer disposes of one of the most undoubted references to our Gospel. The language is so clearly the language of John, that no one who has not either some hypothesis to establish, or some bias to blind his judgment, can fail to admit its paternity. The source of “the saying” is not mentioned; but it was not necessary to mention it. That source was evidently the fourth Gospel, whose existence Tatian establishes, and whose authority he unhesitatingly accepts. There is no other inference from Tatian’s references, which we have given above, than the obvious one that they take us directly to the fourth Gospel.

The next witness we shall bring forward is Theophilus of Antioch, who flourished about 169-180 A.D. It is admitted that in his work, in his defence of Christianity, which he addresses to Autolycus, we have the first quotation from John’s Gospel. In that work he not only quotes from John’s Gospel, but inserts the name of the author: “And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-bearing [inspired] men, one of whom, John, says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God’ (John, i. 1), showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him. Then he says, ‘The Word was with God; all things came into existence through Him, and apart from Him not one

¹ Sup. Relig., pp. 377-8.

thing came into existence.'"¹ It is clear from this that Theophilus was not only acquainted with the fourth Gospel, but also accepted it as the genuine work of John. Jerome, in fact, speaks with approbation of a commentary or harmony of the four Gospels that was written by Theophilus. The words we have quoted, then, as well as the fact which Jerome testifies, teach us plainly that the four Gospels were not only in existence in the middle of the second century, when Theophilus wrote his 'Defence,' but that they had been in existence some time before, and were already received and recognised as standard or authoritative works in the Christian Churches. It is specially clear that the fourth Gospel could not have been referred to, or quoted from, as canonical and apostolical, if it had not been regarded as such by the Christian Church. Mr Tayler, in accepting the testimony of Theophilus, says: "In the work of Theophilus of Antioch, addressed to Autolycus, which must have been written in the reign of Commodus, and therefore subsequent to the year 180 A.D., we have *for the first time* a citation from the fourth Gospel, with the name of its author—John. In explaining the doctrine of the Logos (ii. 22), Theophilus adds: 'As the Holy Scriptures teach us and all the

¹ Theophilus ad Anto., lib. ii. cap. 22.—*Οθεν διδάσκουσι ἡμᾶς αἱ ἄγιοι γραφαί, καὶ πάντες οἱ πνευματοφόροι, ἐξ ὧν Ἰωάννης λέγει· ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν· δεικνύς ὅτι ἐν πρώτοις μόνος ἦν ὁ Θεὸς καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ὁ λόγος. ἔπειτα λέγει· καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν.

inspired—of whom John, being one, says, “In the beginning was the Word,” &c. (John, i. 1). The fourth Gospel is here classed among *ἀγίαι γραφαί*, and its author is described as *πνευματόφορος*; which, of course, gives him a place among canonical or authoritative writers; though even here it is to be noticed that he is not called an apostle. There are several other passages in this work which have their counterpart, sometimes to the very words, in the Gospel. . . . No one can doubt that Theophilus was acquainted with the fourth Gospel, and considered it a part of Holy Scripture; but there is only one passage in which he mentions its author by name.”¹

With these words and sentiments, so far as they admit the acquaintance of Theophilus with our Gospel, we entirely agree. The mere fact that John’s name is only once mentioned has little weight in our estimation; and as to the objection, that though John’s name occurs in Theophilus, yet he is not spoken of as an apostle, it is to be regretted that Mr Tayler should have gone out of his way to remind us of this fact. It would almost appear that the plain proof which Theophilus furnishes of the apostolicity of John’s Gospel was unpalatable to the writer, and that he would have preferred that the question of authorship had still remained in an unsettled condition, and had been left in the regions of doubt and controversy. His remarks on this

¹ An Attempt, &c., pp. 66-7.

point lead us to the conclusion that, in discussing the genuineness of the fourth Gospel, Mr. Tayler has not always brought to the consideration of it the calmness and fairness of an impartial writer, but has occasionally gone out of his way to suggest difficulties, if not deficiencies, in the argumentative process, by which those who accept the authenticity of John's Gospel have been confirmed in what they hold to be correct and orthodox conclusions.

The next witness we shall appeal to is Irenæus, who was Bishop of Lyons, in Gaul, and who died about 202 A.D. In his youth he was the friend and disciple of Polycarp, and from this it has been inferred that he was a native of Asia Minor. When seventy years of age he became Bishop of Lyons, and it is commonly supposed that he suffered martyrdom in extreme old age. His testimony is peculiarly valuable on account of his intimacy with Polycarp, who was the friend and disciple of the Apostle John. As Bishop of Lyons in Gaul, he was placed in a favourable position for enjoying frequent intercourse with many Christian communities; and in his book, 'Against Heresies,' there is evidence that he was a close and thoughtful observer of what was going on in the ecclesiastical world. It has been the aim of modern criticism to ridicule the testimony of Irenæus, and to write disparagingly of his evidence; but the language of irony or abuse is not the language of argument, and has no weight against the plain

statements which Irenæus furnishes about the origin and existence of the four Gospels. The testimony of Irenæus is not a deduction from certain premises, about which there might be some room or scope for "the critical faculty," as it has been styled, but a distinct declaration of facts which were within the reach of his personal knowledge and ecclesiastical experience. Let us see, then, what is the testimony which he bears on behalf of our Gospel. After a reference to the resurrection of Jesus, and to the outpouring of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples, by which they were endowed for their divine mission, he says: "Matthew, then among the Jews, wrote a Gospel in their own language; while Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel at Rome, and founding a Church there. And after their exit (death or departure), Mark, also the disciple and interpreter of Peter, delivered to us in writing the things that had been preached by Peter. And Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him (Paul). Afterwards John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned upon His breast, he likewise published a Gospel while he dwelt at Ephesus in Asia."¹ If this passage is conclusive on any point, it is surely on this—the writer's conviction of the apos-

¹ Lib. iii. cap. 1.—Ὁ μὲν δὲ Ματθαῖος ἐν τοῖς Ἑβραίοις τῇ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ αὐτῶν, καὶ γραφὴν ἐξήνεγκεν εὐαγγελίου, τοῦ Πέτρου, καὶ τοῦ Παύλου ἐν Ῥώμῃ εὐαγγελιζομένων καὶ θεμελιούντων τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, μετὰ δὲ τὴν τούτων ἐξοδόν, Μάρκος ὁ μαθητὴς καὶ ἐρμηνευτὴς Πέτρου καὶ αὐτὸς τὰ ὑπὸ Πέτρου κηρυσσόμενα ἐγγράφως ἡμῖν παραδίδωκε. καὶ Λουκᾶς δὲ ἀκόλουθος

tolie and Johannine origin of the fourth Gospel. It shows that in the estimation of Irenæus, and those to whom he wrote, the fourth Gospel was the work of him whose name it bears, and that he wrote it while residing at Ephesus. If it had not been regarded as such, it is not conceivable that Irenæus would have written of it as he has done, or that he would have expected it to be received as such by his countrymen and contemporaries. The reasons that Irenæus assigns why there could not be more or fewer than four Gospels may be fanciful, but this does not destroy the weight of his testimony as to the existence of these Gospels. His reasons are the following: "For as there are four regions of the world in which we live, four catholic spirits, and the Church is spread all over the earth, and the Gospel is the pillar and foundation of the Church, and the spirit of life; in like manner was it fit it should have four pillars, breathing out on all sides incorruption, and refreshing mankind. Whence it is manifest that the Word, the Former of all things, Who sits upon the cherubim and upholds all things, having appeared to men, has given us a Gospel of a fourfold character, but joined in one Spirit. . . . The Gospel according to John declares His primary and glorious generation from the Father: 'In the beginning was the

Παύλου, τὸ ὑπ' ἐκείνου κηρυσσόμενον εὐαγγέλιον ἐν βιβλίῳ κατέθετο, ἔπειτα Ἰωάννης ὁ μαθητὴς τοῦ κυρίου, ὁ καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος αὐτοῦ ἀναπεσὼν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐξέδωκε τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, ἐν Ἐφέσῳ τῆς Ἀσίας διατριβῶν.

Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made.' . . . But the Gospel according to Luke, being of a priestly character, begins with Zacharias the priest offering incense to God. . . . Matthew relates his generation, which is according to man: 'The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.' . . . Mark begins from the prophetic spirit which came down from above to men, saying, 'The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as it is written in Esaias the prophet.'"¹ In reference to this quotation, and to the value of the testimony of Irenæus, Mr Tayler says: "It has been often said that the strange reasons assigned by Irenæus (iii. xi. 8) for there being neither more nor fewer than four Gospels, puerile as they are, do not at all invalidate his testimony to the fact that the Gospels received by the Catholic Church as authoritative were four, and that they bore the names which he gives them. This is perfectly true; and yet the very way in which he introduces the mention of this fact proves to me that the limitation of number on which he insists as something final and conclusive was of comparatively recent origin."²

¹ Lib. iii. cap. 2.—'Ἐπειδὴ . . . τέσσαρα κλίματα τοῦ κόσμου, ἐν ᾧ ἔσμεν, εἰσὶ, καὶ τέσσαρα καθολικὰ πνεύματα, κατέσπασται δὲ ἡ ἐκκλησία ἐπὶ πέντε τῆς γῆς, στόλος τε καὶ στήριγμα ἐκκλησίας τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, καὶ πνεῦμα ζωῆς· κ. τ. λ.

² An Attempt, &c., p. 73.

Whatever may be said as to the time when our Gospels were limited in number, and were accepted by the Church as authoritative, it seems to us that the very fact that Irenæus looks about to find reasons why they should be only four in number, and neither more nor less, affords presumptive evidence that that number was their recognised number before his time. The veneration in which he held the Gospels led him to search for reasons why there are necessarily four, which though fanciful, were yet satisfactory to his own mind. Upon the whole, it appears to us that their authority was in his time so accepted and established, and their number four so undisputed, that Irenæus felt at liberty to justify and explain it in his own peculiar way. The evidence of Irenæus as to the apostolic authorship of the fourth Gospel is complete, though it was not his design to prove its authorship. If anything is established by the quotations we have given, it is not only that in the time of Irenæus there were four Gospels recognised as apostolic and canonical, but also that the Gospel according to St John was one of these, and was of undoubted authority in the Christian Church.

Irenæus, as we have said, was a disciple of Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John, and it is difficult to believe that Polycarp did not entertain Irenæus with his own personal recollections of what had fallen from the lips of the apostle. Tischendorf

brings out this very fully, and with his arguments we conclude our appeal to Irenæus on behalf of John's Gospel: "The time when Irenæus, then a young man, was known to Polycarp, who died a martyr at Smyrna about A.D. 165, could not have been later than A.D. 150; yet they would have us believe that Irenæus had not then heard a word from his master, Polycarp, about the Gospel of St John, when he so often recalls the discourses of this apostle. Any testimony of Polycarp in favour of the Gospel refers us back to the Evangelist himself; for Polycarp, in speaking to Irenæus of this Gospel as a work of his master, St John, must have learned from the lips of the apostle himself whether he was its author or not. There is nothing more damaging to these doubters of the authenticity of St John's Gospel than this testimony of Polycarp; and there is no getting rid of this difficulty unless by setting aside the genuineness of the testimony itself. This fact also becomes more striking if we consider it under another aspect. What I mean is this: those who deny the authenticity of St John's Gospel, say that this Gospel only appeared about A.D. 150, and that Polycarp never mentioned the Gospel as such to Irenæus. But in this case, can we suppose that Irenæus would have believed in the authenticity of this Gospel, a work that professed to be the most precious legacy of St John to the Christian Church, as the narrative of an eyewitness and an intimate friend of

the Redeemer, and a Gospel whose independent character, as regards the other three, seemed to take away something from their authority? The very fact that such a work of St John had never once been mentioned to him by Polycarp would have at once convinced Irenæus that it was an audacious imposture. And are we to believe that Irenæus would produce such a forgery as this with which to reply to these false teachers, who themselves falsified Scripture, and appealed to apocryphal writings as if they were genuine and inspired? And are we further to suppose that he would have linked such a writing up with the other three Gospels to combine what he calls a quadruple or four-sided Gospel? What a tissue of contradictions, or rather, to use the right word, of absurdities!

“These arguments, as we have just stated them, are not new; they are at least found in Irenæus. They have been stated before, but they have scarcely ever received the consideration which they deserve. For our part, we think serious and reflecting men quite right in attaching more weight to these historic proofs of Irenæus, derived from Polycarp, in favour of the authenticity of St John’s Gospel, than to those scruples and negations of learned men of our day, who are smitten with a strange passion for doubt.”¹

The next evidence we shall adduce is from what is known as the Muratori Fragment. This document,

¹ Date of the Gospels, pp. 53-55.

which contains a catalogue of the sacred books, and which derives its name from Muratori, its discoverer, is corroborative of the testimony we have already brought forward for the fourth Gospel. This fragment, which may be either a translation from the Greek or a Latin original, is of ancient date, and was written probably about 170 or 180 A.D. It is beyond doubt a very ancient document, and the importance of it in the discussion is this, that it gives the names of those New Testament books which were accepted as authoritative by the Churches. The list supplies us with evidence of the existence of our four Gospels, and says—after a blank, where evidently the names of Matthew and Mark were inserted—that the third Gospel is according to Luke, and the fourth by John, one of the disciples.¹ In this fragment the fourth Gospel is ascribed to John, who is said to be “of the disciples,” and there is no doubt that by this description we are to understand John the Apostle. If, then, this document proceeded either from the Church in Africa or from the Church of Rome, as there is reason to believe, between 170 and 180, it follows that our Gospel was widely known and publicly read at that date in the Churches of the West, which it could not have been if

¹ *Tertium Evangelii Librum secundum Lucam.* Lucas iste medicus post ascensum Christi cum eum Paulus quasi ut juris studiosum secum aduinsisset nomini sui ex ordine conscripsit. Dominum tamen nec ipse vidit in carne, et idem prout assequi potuit. Quartum Evangeliorum Joannis ex discipulis.

it had made its first appearance in an Eastern province only a few years before. It follows from this that not only did the Gospels, including John's, exist about 170 A.D., but that they were placed at that early period in the same order in which we have them, and in which they generally have been placed.

There is also evidence of the antiquity of our Gospel in the two most ancient versions of the New Testament. One of these translations is into Syriac, and is called the *Peschito*; the other is into Latin, and is called the *Italic*. The Syriac version is generally assigned to the second century, though there is no positive proof of its date. The Latin version was in use, and had acquired some authority, before the end of the second century. Now in both these versions the Gospel of John, no less than the other three Gospels, is recognised as a canonical work; and so it follows, that between the year 150 and 200 A.D. the fourth Gospel was not only in existence, but was recognised as one of the sacred and canonical Gospels, and was as such translated into two different languages.

4. WHAT THE HERETICS AND THE HEATHEN SAY.

Marcion's testimony, which we shall first adduce, is of considerable importance. He was born at Sinope, on the shores of the Black Sea, in the first half of the second century. He is said to have been the

son of the bishop of the place, and to have been expelled from the Christian community there by his own father. It has been alleged that the cause of his excommunication was a moral offence; but as this allegation rests on doubtful authority, we are disposed to reject it. It seems more probable that he was excommunicated on account of his religious opinions, rather than for any immoral conduct. He became the founder of a Gnostic and anti-Jewish party, and was distinguished for his pre-eminent piety as well as by his strictly ascetic life. He regarded Christianity as the only divine religion, and rejected the divinity of the Mosaic system. About 140 A.D. he went to Rome, where he taught his peculiar doctrines with ability and acceptance. He composed, or rather compiled, a canon of Scripture in harmony with his own peculiar tenets—a canon which embraced St Luke's Gospel in an abridged form, and ten of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. It has been asserted that Marcion had no knowledge of the fourth Gospel, and that if it had existed in his time he would have supported his views by quotations from it. The author of 'Supernatural Religion' says: "There is not the slightest evidence that Marcion knew the fourth Gospel; and if he did, it is perfectly inexplicable that he did not adopt it as peculiarly favourable to his own views."¹ But, in reply, it is not to be forgotten that if in some respects

¹ Sup. Relig., ii. 30.

the fourth Gospel favoured the creed of Marcion, in other respects it was wholly opposed to it. The prologue, for instance, would have been rejected by him ; and, in particular, the statement "that all things were created by the Logos." The allusion to the Old Testament in John, i. 45, and the account of Christ's presence at the marriage-feast of Cana, were adverse to the views of Marcion. The Christ of Marcion could not have uttered such expressions as those which we find in John, i. 47, iv. 22 and 46 ; nor could he have received the title given him in John, i. 49. But, even on the supposition that John's Gospel was in some respects favourable to the views of Marcion, it is proper to point out that on account of its internal structure it would have been almost impossible to make such alterations upon it as would have been necessary for his purpose. And be it remembered also that, as John's Gospel was issued with the name of a Jew apostle, Marcion, whose anti-Jewish proclivities were so pronounced, must have looked upon it with suspicion ; and in fact, according to Tertullian, it was on this ground that he justified his rejection of it. The Gospel, therefore, was not so favourable to the sentiments of Marcion as the author of 'Supernatural Religion' and others would have us to believe.

But it is not admitted that there is no evidence that "Marcion knew the fourth Gospel." On the contrary,

Irenæus¹ and Tertullian² inform us that Marcion received the four Gospels, but, on account of certain supposed Judaising tendencies, he rejected the Gospel of John. It appears from this that the fourth Gospel was in existence in the time of Marcion, and that it was recognised in the Christian community as the work of John. The following quotation from Tertullian clearly proves that Marcion knew the fourth Gospel: "If thou hadst not industriously rejected some and corrupted others of the Scriptures that oppose thy opinion, the Gospel of John would have confounded thee in this point."³ This language is surely unquestionable proof of Marcion's acquaintance with John's Gospel. It shows not only that he knew it, but that he knew it to be John's, and that on account of its contents he rejected it. It is clear from all this that Marcion at one time admitted its authority; and it does not appear, nor is there any evidence to show, that he ever questioned its apostolic authorship. In his time, and among his contemporaries, it was recognised as an authoritative work, and was held in much esteem. It had not then made its appearance suddenly and for the first time, but, as we have endeavoured to show, had existed from the beginning of the second century, was believed

¹ Adv. Hær., i. 27.

² Adv. Marcion, i. 3, 4, 5.

³ De Carne Christi, iii. 895.—Si scripturas opinioni tuæ resistentes non de industriâ alias rejecisses, alias corrupisses, confudisset te in hac specie evangelium Joannis.

to be the work of the Apostle John, and was referred to as a sacred and an authoritative production. Therefore, whatever the adherents of the Tübingen school may advance to explain away Marcion's early acceptance, and his subsequent rejection of our Gospel, his testimony in proof of its early origin cannot by any possibility be set aside. That testimony shows us that Marcion, whose early life was passed in Asia Minor, where John's Gospel is supposed to have been written, knew it to be apostolic, and he therefore is a valuable and reliable witness for the authenticity of our Gospel.

Valentinus, to whom we shall next refer, was the founder of a Gnostic sect. He is said to have been a native of Egypt, and to have received his education at Alexandria, where he lived till about 140 A.D. From Egypt he went to Rome, and resided there for nearly twenty years, or till about 160 A.D. Subsequently he retired to Cyprus, where he openly seceded from the communion of the Church, and where shortly afterwards he died. He was a man of great ability and intelligence, and probably not one of the early heretics equalled him as a thinker. His heresy has an especial interest for us, as it was one of the chief reasons which induced Irenæus to publish his great work against Gnosticism, entitled 'The Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge falsely so called.' In the writings of Valentinus about the Celestial Powers, Primitive Intelligence, Æons, &c., there are references to our Gospel which it is almost

impossible to evade. It follows from this, as Tischendorf puts it, that "either Valentinus borrowed from St John, or St John from Valentinus." But there is not the slightest reason for thinking that St John borrowed from Valentinus, though Bretschneider, Baur, and Zeller seem to decide otherwise. Irenæus plainly teaches that the Valentinians made use of John's Gospel, and Hippolytus confirms the testimony of Irenæus. He quotes several of the sayings of our Lord recorded by St John which were adopted by Valentinus. One of the most distinct and unquestionable references is that to John, x. 8. Hippolytus says, that Valentinus taught that, "The prophets and the law were works by an inferior and a less intelligent spirit," and that in proof of this doctrine he quotes these words of Christ, "All that have been before me were thieves and robbers."¹ It is, we think, abundantly clear from this, that Valentinus was acquainted with the fourth Gospel, and that when he founded his school, about 140 or 150 A.D., that Gospel was authoritatively used in the Christian Church. But it was not only used and referred to by Valentinus—it was also made use of by his followers. Irenæus testifies this, and says that those who belong to Valentinus use the Gospel according to John most abundantly, to display their conjugations.²

¹ Hippol., Phil. vi. 35.

² Hær. iii. 2.—Hi autem qui a Valentino sunt eo quod est secundum Joannem plenissime utentes, &c.

And we find that it was so. Ptolemæus and Heracleon, two of his most celebrated followers, who lived about 150 A.D., made reference to it. Ptolemæus, in an Epistle to Flora,¹ quotes John, i. 3; and Heracleon wrote a commentary upon the Gospel, from which Origen gives several extracts. From all which it appears not only that Valentinus himself held our Gospel in high esteem, but that it was well known and much appreciated among those to whom he wrote.* In reference to the evidence which the Valentinian school furnishes on behalf of our Gospel, Heinrici says: "From the mode of quotation employed, it is demonstrably evident that the Valentinians used Scripture as a universally recognised authority; that it consequently possessed that authority previous to the appearance of the system. . . . The use which the Valentinians made of Scripture proves (in particular) that the Gospel of John and the Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians were acknowledged writings, and already employed as apostolic writings in the first half of the second century."² It is clear, therefore, that our Gospel existed, and that its authority was accepted at a very early period in the second century.

The 'Clementine Homilies,' supposed to be the work of a Judaising writer, also refer to John's Gospel, and make several quotations from it. It is said, for example, "Wherefore also our Teacher answered those who in-

¹ Epiphan., Hær. xxxiii. 3.

² Quoted by Godet.

quired of him with respect to the man who had been born blind and received his sight again, whether he had sinned or his parents, that he had been born blind, 'Neither has he committed any sin, nor his parents, but that the power of God which heals sins of ignorance might be manifested through him.'"¹ The reference in this passage is manifestly to John's Gospel, where we find the following words: "And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."² Then, again, the following sentence occurs in the Homilies: "He [a true *próphē*t] said, 'My sheep hear my voice.'"³ This is evidently a literal quotation from John, x. 27. It is admitted that this work, which* bears the name of the Roman Clement, was written about 160 A.D.; and therefore we have in this work an early recognition of the existence and authority of the fourth Gospel.

¹ Clem. Hom. xix. 22, p. 187, ed. Lagarde.—"Οθεν καὶ . . . αλος ἡμῶν περὶ τοῦ ἐκ γενετῆς περοῦ καὶ ἀναβλέψαντος παρ' αὐτοῦ ἐξετα . . . ἐν οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ τυφλὸς ἐγεννήθη, ἀπεκρίνατο, "Οὐτε οὗτος τι ἥμαρτεν οὐτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἵνα δι' αὐτοῦ φανερωθῇ ἡ δύναμις τοῦ Θεοῦ," κ.τ.λ.

² John, ix. 2, 3.—Καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες, "Ραββί, τίς ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ;" Ἀπεκρίθη δ' Ἰησοῦς, "Οὐτε οὗτος ἥμαρτεν, οὐτε οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῇ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ."

³ Clem. Hom. iii. 52.

The Gnostics, the Montanists, and others refer to the fourth Gospel in such a way as to show that they were acquainted with its contents and influenced by its doctrine. The Christian Ophites, too, who are allowed to have been among the earliest representatives of Gnosticism, and who lived not long after the apostolic age, show that the Gospel was in use and had its influence in their day. Celsus, who lived in the latter half of the second century, bears important testimony. He is not to be regarded as a heretic, but as a heathen philosopher and an enemy of Christianity. In his polemic against Christianity, he alludes to the Logos and other expressions which are to be found in John's Gospel exclusively; and therefore our Gospel must have been widely circulated and extensively known in the time of Celsus.

There are other testimonies which might be adduced in support of the authenticity of John's Gospel, but it seems superfluous to add to the amount of testimony we have already presented.

It will now be necessary to review the evidence we have produced, and to ascertain what testimony it bears on the question before us. It will not be difficult to do so, nor will it be possible to evade the conclusion to which it manifestly leads. If we look first of all at the internal evidence, there can be no dubiety as to what it testifies. It is admitted that the Gospel does not mention John by name as its author, but it seems

to us that it points to him as clearly as if it had done so. The verdict which an examination of the internal testimony establishes is, that it is the work of the beloved disciple; and as there is every reason to believe that the beloved disciple was John, it follows that John was the author. The words in which Credner expresses this conclusion are clear and concise, and are as follows: "Were we destitute of all historical accounts respecting the author of the fourth Gospel, who is not named in the writing itself, we should still be led, from internal considerations, from the nature of the style, from the freshness and clearness of the narrative, from the accuracy and particularity of the accounts, from the peculiar manner in which John the Baptist and the sons of Zebedee are mentioned, from the enthusiastic affection which the writer indicates towards Jesus, from the irresistible charm which has been shed over the whole evangelical history, from the philosophical views with which the Gospel begins, to the following conclusions: the author of such a Gospel can only be a native of Palestine, can only be an immediate eyewitness, can only be an apostle, can only be a favourite disciple of Jesus,—can only, in fine, be that *John* whom Jesus, with the whole heavenly fascination of His doctrine, had bound to Himself; that John who leaned on the bosom of Jesus, as well as stood beside His cross, and whose later residence in a city like Ephesus shows that not only did philosophical speculation attract him,

but that he knew how to maintain his ground among philosophically-educated Greeks."¹

The evidence from tradition tells the same story, and leads us to the same conclusion. That testimony is both ancient and uniform; it lifts up an unvarying voice for our Gospel's early existence and apostolic authorship. The tradition, though it may be denied, cannot be disproved. The Gospel, which is the subject of it, still exists; and, to say the least, there is nothing about it contradictory of the tradition. On the contrary, the language of the writer is what we would have expected from John, and the epithet by which he is described has been generally believed to apply to that apostle. The tradition, when it arose, must have arisen out of facts; and whatever these facts were, they must have satisfied those who accepted the tradition that they were sufficient vouchers for it. There is no other way of accounting for the tradition, or for its acceptance by those who had the means of investigating into its truth or falsehood, and who, if they had not had sufficient evidence to establish its reliableness, were under no temptation to receive and transmit it. The traditionary evidence, therefore, in favour of our Gospel is very strong, and it shows that for about eighteen hundred years it has been recognised as the authentic work of the Apostle John.

Then, again, the testimonies of external history—

¹ Quoted by Roberts, *Discussions on Gospels*, pp. 506, 507.

Christian and Pagan—lead as imperatively to the same conclusion. They sufficiently establish that the fourth Gospel was recognised and cited from in 180 A.D. But they further satisfy us, by obvious references and allusions, that it existed anterior to that date and very early in the second century. They show us that it existed before Valentinianism began to flourish in Egypt, or Montanism in Asia Minor, and that its authority is appealed to in support of the speculative tenets of these and other early sects. It seems further to follow that it could not have been accepted as an authentic production at such an early period of the Christian era, had it not been—what in all ages it has been believed to be—the work of him who is known in ecclesiastical history as “the beloved disciple,” and whose privilege it was at the Last Supper to lean upon the bosom of Him whose sayings and doings he has so beautifully narrated. In whatever view the testimonies we have produced are contemplated, it seems to us that the only conclusion an unbiassed judgment can come to regarding them is, that the fourth Gospel is the work of him to whom through all centuries it has been ascribed, and that its authenticity rests on a basis which no scepticism, however ingenious, can either remove or impair. It is not possible on any other supposition to account for the fact that ecclesiastical writers of this early period, of every shade of opinion, and in every part of the Christian world—Irenæus in Gaul, Tertul-

lian in Africa, Clement in Alexandria, Theophilus at Antioch, the Muratorian writer in Rome—received it without question or suspicion,—not only received it, but wrote as if the reception had been of long standing—that they never seemed to imagine that its authenticity had been questioned at any period or by any party. The more the question of its authorship is discussed, and the authorities for its apostolic origin examined, the less doubt is there of its Johannine origin. The attacks on our Gospel during the last few years have been keen and fierce, but these very attacks have called forth such an amount of advocacy, and such an abundance of argument for our Gospel, that its authenticity is now seen to rest on such an unassailable basis, and on such unquestionable facts, that no one who does not willingly prefer wrong to right, error to truth, will dare to say that the fourth Gospel is not the work of the Apostle John.

It is no doubt the fact, as we have already stated, and one which the adherents of the Tübingen school are careful to dwell upon, that our Gospel is first cited about the year 180 A.D. ; but let us ask ourselves if it is reasonable to believe that at that time it came first into view and first claimed attention? No one who is not labouring under prejudice or prepossession of some sort will assert this. It is evident from all our researches that at that time our Gospel was in the hands of Asiatic Christians and others, was accepted by them as a well-

known document, and believed by them to be the work of the Apostle John. The old Latin version contained our Gospel, and it, as we have seen, was in existence considerably before the end of the second century. The Syriac version, too, has our Gospel, and it was made probably at a still earlier date. In these versions we have historical evidence that the African Churches and the Eastern Churches were in possession of our Gospel, probably about the middle of the second century, and that it was regarded by them as one of the authentic records of the life of Christ. But if its value was so much appreciated as to cause it to be translated into two different languages at that period, it follows that it must have come into existence considerably earlier, and that its merits must have been recognised as an authority by the early Churches. If we turn to the West, Irenæus furnishes us with the most reliable testimony respecting the Gospels in use there. This Father, who was, as we have said, Bishop of Lyons, and was in his youth acquainted with Polycarp, the disciple of John, describes them in such a way as to satisfy us that those Gospels which he possessed were the very same as those which are now in our hands. The reasons which he gives for their number being limited to four may be fanciful enough, but the fact that he does so is strong evidence that in his days there were only four Gospels—of which one was John's—which were accepted as original and authentic narratives of the life of Christ.

In all the regions of the then Christian world, the testimony is strong and unanimous as to the early origin and apostolic authorship of our Gospel. It follows, therefore, that if our Gospel was in general circulation and acceptance at that early period, it must have been in existence some time before; and the only conclusion to which we can come, and which seems to us "irresistible," is that it is an apostolic work, and is traceable to him to whom in all centuries an almost unvarying tradition has assigned it.

III.

THE SILENCE OF EUSEBIUS.

THE rejecters of our Gospel appeal to the silence of Eusebius with so much confidence—the inferences they draw from it are in our opinion so erroneous—the main purpose of his book is so greatly misinterpreted and misunderstood—that we think it important to deal with this subject more fully than we have done in the preceding pages, and with this view to consider it in a short and special section. These critics lay much stress upon this silence, and argue that it leads logically and legitimately to their conclusions. And we may admit that at first sight their inferences seem to have some foundation; and if no other solution of this silence can be given, it will be imperative upon us to treat them with respect and consideration. But we believe we are able to suggest another explanation than the one adopted by these critics, and to show that the silence of Eusebius gives no real countenance to their inferences and conclusions. To enable us to decide

what kind or weight of inference is to be drawn from a writer's silence on any subject, it is essential to ascertain at the outset what necessity existed for any reference to or discussion of it in his treatise. The point to find out is, what was the main purpose which the writer had in view; what was the chief task he set himself to accomplish; what likelihood there was that he would make mention of any particulars which, though akin to his main purpose, were not essential to the full elucidation of it; and what inferences may be fairly drawn from his silence as to these particulars, which, for some reason or other, he has not embodied in his book. It is quite conceivable, and it will be admitted, that however conversant and familiar a writer may be with all the aspects of any question on which he writes, he may not think it necessary nor in keeping with his chief purpose to deal with more than a few of these aspects. It will therefore be wrong to infer from his partial silence that he has no knowledge of, and can give no information upon, those aspects on which he is silent, and no one can rightly uphold any such conclusion. Let us take an illustration of our meaning from times and events that are passing over us. Let us suppose that the future historian of the recent conference at Constantinople proposes to narrate mainly either the Russian or Turkish side, and to give an account of that alleged Turkish misrule which chiefly occasioned the conference. It is quite conceivable that,

with this purpose principally and prominently before him, he may not feel it necessary to mention by name each of the illustrious personages that met in conference, and therefore may pass over in silence the name of the British ambassador. There is nothing improbable in supposing that his history may be a very instructive and accurate one, and that yet it may contain no reference either to the presence or performance of our representative. But it would be wrong to construe his silence into an argument that he was ignorant of Lord Salisbury's presence, or of the share he took in the Constantinople deliberations. It was not his main purpose to give the name and to describe the work of each delegate, but simply to explain the general circumstances which occasioned the conference, the object for which they met, and their failure to secure an amicable arrangement. And so, before we can rightly draw any inference from the silence of Eusebius, in his quotations from early writers, as to any particular point or subject we are investigating, it is essential to ascertain, as far as possible, what was his main purpose in giving quotations from these writers. And in seeking to arrive at a conclusion on this point, we derive light and assistance from Eusebius himself.

But before we quote his words, or attempt to comment upon them, it will be important to define exactly what use the rejecters of our Gospel seek to make of this silence. And as this is stated with sufficient force

and fulness by the author of 'Supernatural Religion,' we shall accept of his statement as that of the school to which he belongs; and in doing so we shall do his party no injustice, because there is perhaps no portion of his book in which he advocates his views more ably and eloquently than in that in which he discusses the silence of Eusebius. The position he takes up may be stated thus,—that those writers whom Eusebius quotes did not and could not know of any canonical book which is not mentioned in the quotation. Or, to put it more plainly, as Eusebius does not furnish us with a quotation from certain canonical books in those extracts which he gives from certain early writers, it follows that these writers were unacquainted with these canonical books. Or, to be more particular still, the author of 'Supernatural Religion,' and others of the same school, argue that the fourth Gospel did not exist in the time of Papias, for if it had, Papias would have made mention of it; and if Papias had made mention of it, Eusebius, to whom we are indebted for our knowledge of Papias, would have given us information to this effect. That is the position the author of 'Supernatural Religion' defends, and the line of argument he adopts. But it will be proper to let him speak for himself. In referring to the fact that Eusebius, in his quotation from Papias, quotes nothing to show that Papias had any acquaintance with our Gospel, he says: "Eusebius, who never fails to enumerate the works of

the New Testament to which the Fathers refer, does not pretend that Papias knew either the third or fourth Gospels."¹ And in a subsequent passage he alleges: "Had he [Papias] expressed any recognition of the fourth Gospel, Eusebius would certainly have mentioned the fact, and this silence of Papias is strong presumptive evidence against the Johannine Gospel."² And then, a little further on, he adds: "The presumption, therefore, naturally is, that as Eusebius did not mention the fact, he did not find any reference to the fourth Gospel in the work of Papias."³ These quotations abundantly illustrate the position of our author, and show us that in his opinion the silence of Eusebius sufficiently proves that Papias, whom he quotes, knew nothing of our Gospel. Now it is important to observe, that the ecclesiastical literature of the second century must have been extensive, and that almost all that remains of it is preserved to us in the works of Eusebius. Papias, Hegisippus, Melito, and Appolinaris were voluminous writers; and had their works been handed down to us separate and entire, there can be little doubt but that they would have solved many problems which now surround the history of the canon. But it is only in Eusebius that we have any traces of their works, and these are found in a very fragmentary form. Now it is this incompleteness, or omission, or silence, which has furnished the author

¹ Vol. i. p. 483.² Vol. ii. p. 322.³ Vol. ii. p. 323.

of 'Supernatural Religion' with one of his trustiest weapons, which he has handled with such dexterity in assaulting our Gospel. Let us then go on to examine his position, and to consider whether or not the inferences he draws from this silence are not, to say the least, considerably exaggerated. The purpose of Eusebius, as we have said, must help us here; and what that purpose was, he himself very clearly defines. Briefly stated, it was twofold, as it refers to two different kinds of writings: first of all, to mention any references he could discover to what he calls disputed writings; and secondly, to record any anecdotes he might hear, either about disputed or undisputed writings. The words in which Eusebius defines his purpose are these: "But as my history proceeds, I will take care . . . to indicate what Church writers, from time to time, have made use of any of the disputed books, and what has been said by them concerning the canonical and acknowledged Scriptures, and anything that (they have said) concerning those which do not belong to this class."¹ It is evident from this passage that there were, as we have said, two classes of writings with which Eusebius undertook to deal, and that he proposed to bring forward different sorts of notices concerning them. The one kind consisted of

¹ H. E. iii. 3.—Προϊούσης δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας προὔργου ποιήσομαι, σὺν ταῖς διαδοχαῖς ὑποσημῆνασθαι, τίνες τῶν κατὰ χρόνους ἐκκλησιαστικῶν συγγραφέων ὁποῖαις κέχρηται τῶν ἀντιλεγόμενων, τίνα τε περὶ τῶν ἐνδιαθέκων καὶ ὁμολογουμένων γραφῶν, κ.τ.λ.

those which always had a place in our New Testament, and whose authenticity was never disputed; the other consisted of those whose authenticity was a disputed point, but which now also have a place in our canon; and his purpose was to record any reference he might find to the latter in any ancient writer, and only to mention the former when such a writer had anything to tell about them. His plan was to record any anecdote of interest he might chance to find about them or about the others, but not to produce any proof for the authenticity of those whose authenticity was not a subject of dispute.

In a subsequent passage Eusebius is led to speak of the writings of St John; and as St John's Gospel is one of the four, he refers to the different Gospels in these terms: "Thus much we ourselves (have to say) concerning these [the four Gospels], but we will endeavour more particularly on the proper occasions, by quoting the ancient writers, to set forth what has been said by any one else also concerning them. . . . But respecting the Apocalypse, opinions are drawn in opposite directions even to the present day among most men. Howbeit it also shall receive its judgment at a proper season from the testimonies of the ancients."¹ It will be observed that the historian acts upon the

¹ H. E. iii. 24.—Καὶ ταῦτα μὲν ἡμεῖς περὶ τούτων, οἰκειότερον δὲ κατὰ καιρὸν διὰ τῆς τῶν ἀρχαίων παραθέσεως, τὰ καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις περὶ αὐτῶν εἰρημένα πειρασόμεθα δηλῶσαι, κ.τ.λ.

principle which he had previously laid down for himself; and in reference to the four Gospels, resolves to record only anecdotes concerning them. It is true that he proposes to depart from this rule in the case of the Apocalypse, but his reason is that he may, by any references or testimonies he can discover, provide means for deciding as to its canonical authority. It seems, therefore, to follow from our explanation, that the silence of Eusebius does not lead to any conclusion adverse to the existence or authority of our Gospels, and that his purpose was simply to give anecdotes about them, and not to establish their canonicity, which was unquestioned.

And to show still further that his silence can give no evidence adverse to our Gospel, we appeal to other writings which Eusebius quotes, and which are still extant; and on a comparison of their contents with his notices, we shall find testimony confirmatory of our explanation. It is not our purpose, nor is it necessary, to enter largely upon this aspect of the question, and we shall content ourselves with a single example of his method in giving quotations, from which it will appear how strictly he adhered to it, and also, that there are many things bearing upon authorship in the books he quotes, but of which he takes no notice. The example we shall select is taken from Irenæus, with whose works Eusebius was acquainted, and from which he quotes largely. Irenæus, in his extant work on

Heresies, frequently quotes the Acts, and ascribes it to St Luke. He also cites twelve out of the thirteen Epistles of St Paul, and leaves no doubt as to his belief in their Pauline authorship; yet Eusebius makes no mention of this, nor does he once refer to it. There is nothing in his notices to show that Irenæus knew of Paul's Epistles, or recognised any of them as canonical, and from first to last there is not the slightest allusion to the Acts. If we had not been made aware of the method of Eusebius, this silence would have surprised us; but it is quite intelligible on his plan, and betrays no departure from it. Eusebius, in the chapter on Irenæus, refers to this original purpose, and resolves to abide by it. He says: "Since at the commencement of our treatise we have made a promise, saying that we should adduce, at the proper opportunities, the utterances of the ancient elders and writers of the Church, in which they have handed down in writing the traditions that reached them concerning the canonical writings, and Irenæus was one of these, let me now adduce his notices also, and first those relating to the sacred Gospels, as follows."¹ Eusebius then quotes a passage from the third book,² in which Irenæus notices the circumstances under which the four Gospels were

¹ H. E. v. 8.—'Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀρχόμενοι τῆς πραγματείας ὑπόσχεσιν ποιήμεθα, παραθήσεσθαι κατὰ καιρὸν εἰπόντες τὰς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἐκκλησιαστικῶν πρεσβυτέρων τε καὶ συγγραφεῶν φωνὰς, ἐν αἷς τὰς περὶ τῶν ἐνδιαθέκων γραφῶν, κ.τ.λ.

² Adv. Hær., iii. 1.

written, and subsequently refers to the fifth book,¹ in which Irenæus mentions the date and authorship of the Apocalypse; but this is all that he tells us respecting the canon of the New Testament, so far as the works of Irenæus are concerned. It is evident from this, therefore, that the object of Eusebius was not to establish the authenticity of undisputed books, but to give anecdotes concerning them, and that he recognised the four Gospels, the Acts, and the thirteen Epistles of Paul, as belonging to this class; and it is further evident that, in reference to disputed books, he was desirous to give such help as would decide their right to be placed in the sacred canon.

On the whole, therefore, it seems to us that the silence of Eusebius, as to any recognition of the fourth Gospel in Papias, is rather on our side than against us, and that the easy and simple explanation is, that its authorship was never questioned, so far as Eusebius knew. On this account it was unnecessary to burden his pages with the evidence of witnesses, and hence his silence as to their testimonies. This explanation, too, is quite in harmony with all that we know of the fourth Gospel in the second century—its authorship was never disputed; its authenticity was never questioned; it was universally recognised to be genuine; there are traces of it in the writings of these early times; its spirit breathes in the works of the early Fathers; its

¹ Adv. Hær., v. 30.

theology leavens their literature; its influence is seen in their speculations. And if anything is evident, it is that John's Gospel was a recognised authority from the earliest times, and that it was thought no more necessary to produce witnesses in support of its apostolic authorship, than to establish by evidence that winter is the season of cold, and summer the season of heat.

IV.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED.

1. THE first objection we shall consider is that which is drawn from the language of the Gospel as compared with that of the Apocalypse. It has been argued that the style, the thought, and the language of the Gospel are so unlike those of the Apocalypse, that they cannot be the works of the same author, and that if John wrote the one, he could not have written the other. Such is the conclusion at which De Wette, Ewald, Strauss, Mr Tayler, the author of 'Supernatural Religion,' and others, have arrived. Ewald, though he holds very decidedly that the fourth Gospel is the work of the Apostle John, is equally positive in affirming that the author of that Gospel and of the Apocalypse could not have been the same person. "That this much earlier writing" [Apocalypse], he says, "cannot be derived from the author of the latter [Gospel], is an axiom which I believe to have already, in 1826-28, so convincingly demonstrated, that it would be super-

fluous now to return to it, especially as, since then, all men capable of forming a judgment are of the same opinion; and what has been brought forward by a few writers against it, too clearly depends upon influences foreign to science." De Wette, after comparing the two works, and dwelling upon their dissimilarity in style, &c., says: "From all this it follows (and in New Testament criticism no result is more certain than this), that the Apostle John, if he be the author of the fourth Gospel and of the Johannine Epistles, did not write the Apocalypse; or if these be his work, he is not the author of the other writings."¹ Mr Tayler, after a similar investigation, declares the conclusion to be "irresistible," that "if the Apostle John be the author of the Apocalypse, he cannot have written the Gospel; if he wrote the Gospel, he cannot be the author of the Apocalypse."² The author of 'Supernatural Religion' adopts the same argument, repeats the same difficulty, and arrives at the same results. "It is asserted," he says, "by the Church, that John the son of Zebedee, one of the disciples of Jesus, is the composer of no less than five of our canonical writings; and it would be impossible to select any books of our New Testament presenting more distinct features, or more widely divergent views, than are to be found in the Apocalypse on the one hand, and the Gospel and three Epistles on the other. Whilst a strong

¹ Einleitung in N. T., 189, 4.

² An Attempt, &c., p. 14.

family likeness exists between the Epistles and the Gospel, and they exhibit close analogies both in thought and language, the Apocalypse, on the contrary, is so different from them in language, in style, in religious views, and terminology, that it is impossible to believe that the writer of the one could be the author of the other. . . . It is not necessary to enter upon any exhaustive analysis of the Apocalypse and Gospel to demonstrate anew that both works cannot have emanated from the same mind. This has already been conclusively done by others. Some apologetic writers,—greatly influenced, no doubt, by the express declaration of the Church, and satisfied by the analogies which could scarcely fail to exist between two works dealing with a similar theme,—together with a very few independent critics, have asserted the authenticity of both works. The great majority of critics, however, have fully admitted the impossibility of recognising a common source for the fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse of John. The critical question regarding the two works has, in fact, reduced itself to the dilemma which may be expressed as follows in the words of Lücke: ‘Either the Gospel and the first Epistle are genuine writings of the Apostle John, and in that case, the Apocalypse is no genuine work of that apostle, or the inverse.’”¹

It cannot be denied—and truth would gain nothing by denying—that there is a great difference in the

¹ Sup. Relig., ii. 388-390.

language, the imagery, and style of these two works ; but this difference is not of such a character as to force us to the conclusion that they could not have been the productions of the same person. It does not seem to us that the dissimilarity between them is so immense as to preclude the possibility of some satisfactory explanation being given of this dissimilarity—an explanation sufficient to satisfy us that they may have had the same authorship. Let it be borne in mind that the Apocalypse was a much earlier work than the Gospel, which was the work of John's old age ; and it is conceivable that in the interval his thoughts, and views, and expectations may have become so toned down and modified by the events that had taken place, as to make it quite possible that he who wrote the one book wrote the other also. It is important, too, to notice, that though the Fathers were careful to comment on this difference in style between the two works, they were unanimous in attributing both to the Apostle John. Mr Tayler goes too far when he says that "so complete a transformation of the whole genius of a writer between mature life and old age as is implied in the supposition that John could be the author at once of the Apocalypse and of the Gospel, is without a precedent in the history of the human mind, and seems to me to involve a psychological impossibility."¹ Dr Davidson, whose views, in his

¹ *An Attempt, &c.*, pp. 12, 13.

'Introduction to the New Testament,' are no less hostile to the Johannine authorship of our Gospel than those of Mr Tayler, uses much more moderate language, and says that "it is possible that the vehement and impassioned spirit which appears in the Apocalypse may have been transformed into the calm stillness which the work before us [the Gospel] exhibits; that age and reflection may have caused great mental development, so that the writer became speculative, mystic, spiritualistic, theosophic in his last days. The philosophy of Alexandria, coming in contact with his Judaic mind, may have revolutionised it, while Hellenic culture widened his views of Christianity."¹

The conclusion, therefore, to which Mr Tayler has been driven, is not sufficiently supported, and rests chiefly on his own individual opinion. There have been changes as great, "transformations as complete," in the minds, and views, and actions of individual men, as that transformation which Mr Tayler accounts a psychological impossibility. There is one instance at hand in the history of the apostles. These men, who, at the time of our Lord's trial and crucifixion, acted the part of cowards, and forsook Him whom they had all pledged not to forsake, were so transformed, not in thirty or forty years, but in a few days, that they not only returned to their allegiance, but counted themselves honoured in being thought worthy to suffer for

¹ Intro. to N. T., ii. 441.

Christ. If, then, there was such a transformation as this in the course of a few days; if the events of these days converted those who had betrayed such cowardice into fearless and faithful followers of the Crucified One, it is not easy to determine what changes may have been produced in John's thoughts and sentiments and style during those thirty years or so which elapsed between the composition of the Apocalypse and the appearance of the Gospel. These were years, too, which in their beginning were full of "wars and rumours of wars;" which saw the Roman eagles mustering in great force to destroy the "carcass;" and it is easy to conceive that the thought and style of the writer were partially or largely influenced by these exciting circumstances. It is generally admitted that the Apocalypse was composed between the reign of Galba and the destruction of Jerusalem, and we may assign as its most probable date the year 65 of the Christian era. If this date is the correct one, it was written at a time when, as we have said, the disciples were taught that their "redemption was drawing nigh," and when they fully expected the Son of man to reveal Himself in the clouds of heaven "to avenge His own elect." Hence it is that the Apocalypse is so full of prophetic diction and stirring imagery. But when John wrote his Gospel, which was perhaps thirty or forty years afterwards, and not till he had resided for many years in Asia Minor, "his Judaic mind had

widened its views of Christianity." The visions which had filled his mind in earlier years had now given way to more correct conceptions; and in the school of experience and reflection he had undergone that mental transformation which so strikingly presents itself in the language and style of his Gospel. The same view has been adopted and advocated by a writer in the 'British Quarterly Review,' of whose statement we shall give a brief summary. He says that the difference in the two books as to the language is most remarkable, but thinks that there are facts in connection with these works which may account, partially at least, for this difference. While there is reason to believe that the Apocalypse was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Gospel is universally ascribed to a period near the close of the first century. He believes that the Apocalypse was the first literary effort of a Galilean fisherman who was imperfectly acquainted with Greek, and that this explains the roughness of its style and the uncouthness of its language. He considers that the Gospel was composed after an interval of thirty or forty years passed in the Greek colonies of Asia Minor, and where the writer was brought into contact with men of intelligence and culture, and was compelled to make frequent use of Greek as a medium of conversation and epistolary correspondence. And he argues that the same person who had written the Apocalypse as his first production, might, after having the benefit

of these social and intellectual advantages for so long a period, have written a work as superior to his first in grammar and style as the Gospel is said in these respects to be superior to the Apocalypse. On the whole, therefore, he concludes that there is nothing incredible in what we have endeavoured to prove, that the Apocalypse with all its violations of grammar, and the Gospel with all its excellences of style, are by the same author. It is important, however, to bear in mind, that whether the explanation we have given of the difference in the style of the two works be satisfactory or not, it does not affect the genuineness of the fourth Gospel. The Apocalypse may or may not be the work of John, but so far as our Gospel is concerned, it stands upon its own traditional history, and the evidence of its Johannine origin is not touched by any argument that can be drawn from the difference between its style and that of the Apocalypse. But while we admit that there is a considerable difference in the language and style of these two works, it is not to be forgotten, nor is it fair to overlook the fact, that there are resemblances between them which forcibly suggest, if they do not fully establish, identity of authorship. There are many words, phrases, and constructions which occur in the Apocalypse and in the Gospel peculiar to these writings, and which manifestly indicate a common source. Dr Davidson in his first Introduction has with great diligence collected many

instances of these resemblances, and the conclusion he has come to is that they are not accidental, and either betray the same author, or show that the writer of the one book was influenced by the ideas of the other. But as the verbal coincidences are so close and numerous, it is not possible to accept of the latter alternative, and therefore we are shut up to the conclusion that "they betray the same author."

2. Another objection which has been brought against the authenticity of John's Gospel is derived from the difference of its style and substance from those of the first three evangelists. M. Renan finds his chief difficulty here, and argues from this dissimilarity against its authenticity. At times, indeed, he seems not to trust his own conclusions, and to be in difficulty as to which side to join in the controversy. "On the one hand," he says, "this Gospel presents us with a sketch of the life of Jesus which differs considerably from that of the Synoptics; on the other, it puts into the mouth of Jesus discourses of which the tone, the style, the tenor, and the doctrines have nothing in common with the logic reported by the Synoptics. . . . I do not mean to say that there are not in the discourses of John some admirable flashes, some traits which really came from Jesus, but the mystic tone of these discourses in no way corresponds to the character of the eloquence of Jesus, such as we imagine it to be according to the Synoptics. . . . The spirit of Jesus is not there; and if the son

of Zebedee really wrote these pages, he had, in truth, forgotten when he did so the Lake of Gennesaret and the charming discourses which he heard on its borders."¹ It will be seen from this quotation that the most that Renan admits is that the son of Zebedee *may* have written the fourth Gospel. Though not professing to believe in its Johannine origin, he yet seems to admit its possibility. But in his next paragraph he retracts, or virtually retracts, the concession, and contends that the discourses which John records are not historical. He thinks that John himself had little part in the composition of the Gospel, and that the difference in its style is to be accounted for by supposing that it is to a large extent the work of another hand. He is disposed to believe that the apostle left behind him some precious notes, and that these have been used by the writer in a sense very different from the primitive evangelical spirit. It is in this way that M. Renan deals with the question of John's authorship; and one can easily perceive that while on the one hand he labours to disprove it, on the other he recognises a difficulty in the task he assumes which he can hardly overcome. At one time he appears to admit the apostolic origin of the Gospel; at another he withdraws the admission, and decides adversely. But this perplexity and hesitancy and change of sentiment are not to be wondered at. They are the legitimate out-

¹ Life of Jesus, Intro., p. xxx.

come of the criticism of this sceptical school. Its natural result is to lead to bewilderment and uncertainty; and the only sure refuge we have is a hearty agreement with the old belief in the apostolic authorship of our Gospel. And, strange to say, even M. Renan gives us grounds for resting in this belief. The style of the First Epistle of John is so similar to that of the fourth Gospel, the doctrines are so much alike, that it has been all but universally admitted that the writer of the one is the writer of the other. M. Renan himself admits that the First Epistle is undoubtedly to be ascribed to the same author as the Gospel. But this admission seems to us to decide the whole question. The Johannine origin of the First Epistle has been satisfactorily established; and it follows, therefore, that as the First Epistle was written by John, so also was the fourth Gospel.

The author of 'Supernatural Religion' in reference to this objection says: "The teaching of the one—that is, of the fourth Gospel—is totally different from that of the others, 'the Synoptics;' and in spirit, form, and terminology, and in the prolix discourses of the fourth Gospel, there is not a single characteristic of the simple eloquence of the Sermon on the Mount. In the diffuse mysticism of the Logos we cannot recognise a trace of the terse practical wisdom of Jesus of Nazareth. It must, of course, be apparent even to the most superficial observer that, in the fourth Gospel, we are intro-

duced to a perfectly new system of instruction, and to an order of ideas of which there is not a vestige in the Synoptics. Instead of short and concise lessons full of striking truth and point, we find nothing but long and involved dogmatic discourses of little practical utility. The limpid spontaneity of that earlier teaching, with its fresh illustrations and profound sentences uttered without effort and untinged by art, is exchanged for diffuse addresses and artificial dialogues, in which labour and design are everywhere apparent. From pure and living morality couched in brief incisive sayings, which enter the heart and dwell upon the ear, we turn to elaborate philosophical orations without clearness or order, and to doctrinal announcements unknown to the Synoptics.”¹ But though we do not accept of the version of John’s teaching which is given in the above quotation, we are far from holding that the style of John is not different from that of the Synoptists. If, however, we consider the interval that elapsed between their respective dates, and the strange scenes through which John had passed before he wrote his Gospel, the admitted difference may to a large extent be satisfactorily accounted for. In the Synoptic Gospels, which are allowed to be the earliest histories of Christ, the writers were likely to report Christ’s words in the precise style in which He had spoken them; but in a Gospel which did not make its appear-

¹ Sup. Relig., ii. 462.

ance till at least thirty or forty years afterwards, it is not improbable that the writer would produce a history coloured less or more by the experiences through which he had passed, and the culture which he had acquired. If John wrote his Gospel in Ephesus, as is generally supposed, and wrote it after he had resided in that city for several years, it is no wonder that he reported the discourses of Christ "not in the type of Palestinian Greek, which the Saviour had actually employed, but in the style to which he himself had for long been habituated among the inhabitants of Asia Minor." In addition to this, it ought not to be forgotten that every writer has his own idiom and individuality, and that even under inspiration he does not divest himself of these. The writers of the Bible may be likened to the pipes of an organ. These pipes are all engaged in the same service. The power of breath that awakens them is the same—viz., the breath from the wind-chest. Now one might expect that as there is a monoblast there would be a monotone also. But it is not so. The intonation varies according to the size and the shape of the pipes. And so, though holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, they still retained their individuality, and varied in their style and manner according to their personal idiosyncrasies. The style of Isaiah is unlike that of Ezekiel, and the style of Paul is unlike that of John. Though all wrote under divine inspiration, yet the workings of their minds were not

suspended, and hence we find great varieties of style in their compositions. If, then, we bear this in mind, and if we remember that certainly more than a quarter of a century had elapsed between the appearance of the Synoptics and that of our Gospel, it will not surprise us that John's style is so dissimilar to that of Matthew or Mark.

Mr Orr, who defends the authenticity of John's Gospel, in writing on this aspect of the question, says: "The Synoptists wrote at a time when the prevailing expectations of the early Christians as to a speedy visible return of Jesus to the earth to establish the Messianic kingdom had not been made to give place, by the hard logic of events, to more spiritual conceptions. And that expectation breaks out in the language that these attribute to the Christ: 'And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh' (Luke, xxi. 28). But John lived to an age that saw these expectations dissipated. With him Christ's 'kingdom is no more of this world,' and Christ's teaching acquires the deep spiritual meaning of his own experience.

"Besides, different minds are of different temperaments, and the writings of each, even of historians, are in some degree a reflex of his peculiar temperament, education, and state of information at the time. One is a man of fact, and the other of sentiment; one is a poet,

another a philosopher. What strikes the mind of one is not that which appeals most forcibly to the other, which is dwelt on and remembered. The man of learning and observation will give a very different account of the same transaction from that given by the unlettered peasant. And had John written when the Synoptists did, no doubt he would have given us a very different version of the Saviour's history. In the facts of the early ministry, and in a higher tone of sentiment, it might and would have differed from theirs, but not in its intimations of a Messianic kingdom upon earth. Then the ardent expectation of the speedy and *literal* fulfilment of Christ's prediction before Caiaphas would have broken out, as it has done in the Book of Revelation: 'Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.'

"The minds of those to whom we must trace the first origin of the Synoptical accounts were evidently rude and realistic, on whom deep sentiment and lofty imagery would have been lost; to whom it was necessary to convey moral sentiment in parable to fix it in the memory. These have therefore recorded for us the parables and acts of Jesus. But they have not caught the higher inspiration of Him who said, when all humanity seemed leagued to crush Him, 'And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me.' And when He speaks of the 'Son of man coming in His glory, and

all His holy angels with Him,' His high imagery these have understood literally, as they had not an opportunity of correcting their ideas, like the fourth evangelist, by a more matured experience. When John wrote, however, not only had 'the Spirit of truth come to lead him into all truth,' but the hard teaching of experience had come to give him the true spiritual meaning of Christ's predictions. The vineyard had been taken from the wicked husbandman. The armies that had laid waste Jerusalem had prepared the way for the Son of man coming in His kingdom. The Synoptists wrote amidst the clouds and darkness of the impending struggle; John, when the thick clouds had passed, and the glory of a brighter day had beamed upon him. And why should he now record the old parables, once of doubtful import to him, by which it was prefigured? Once it was indeed true, as the Synoptists tell us, that 'no man knoweth the Son, but the Father;' but John has realised that 'grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' The warnings of Jesus as to false Christs and false prophets are matters of the past, and 'the true light now shineth.'"¹

But it is said that the fourth Gospel differs not only in its style, but also in its substance, from the Synoptic Gospels; and it is argued that Christ could not have uttered what John ascribes to Him. But it ought to be remembered that the Gospels give us but partial or fragmentary accounts both of the words and works of

¹ Authenticity of John's Gospel, pp. 78, 79.

Jesus. They are, at the most, only what has been styled "disjointed or fragmentary;" and in each of them there is some aspect of Christ's person and work more dwelt upon than in the others. One writer passes over some things which another records, and in this way we find in them different aspects of the life of Jesus. It is clear, from John, xx. 30, that his Gospel was not a complete record of all the incidents and discourses in Christ's life; and it may be inferred from Luke, vii. 22, that miracles of the dead raised up, though only a few are mentioned in the records of the Synoptics, were by no means uncommon. On this account it may be that the first three Gospels pass over the raising of Lazarus, and take no notice of that miracle. It is probable that such an event was not uncommon, and therefore was not so extraordinary in their eyes as it is in ours. But though there are different representations of Christ's life and teaching in the four Gospels, it is incorrect to say that they are contradictory of each other. They may give us different accounts of Him of whom they all wrote; some of them may dwell more on one aspect of His life, and some of them more on another; but there is no contradiction in their testimonies, and together they present us with a harmonious history of Him who, while on earth, "went about doing good," and who

"Pursues in heaven His mighty plan,
The Saviour and the friend of man."

"Nor, as M. Renan himself admits, are points of

affinity wanting between the first three Gospels and that of John. 'Certain passages of Luke,' he says, 'in which there is, as it were, an echo of the Johannine traditions, prove that these traditions were not a thing altogether unknown to the rest of the Christian community' (p. xxxvii.) He instances the pardon of the woman that was a sinner, the knowledge which Luke shows of the family of Bethany, and other particulars in the third Gospel, which he judges to be more or less in accordance with the fourth. He might have also referred to Matt. xi. 25-30, Luke, x. 21, in which we find the exact spirit which breathes throughout the fourth Gospel. Such passages in the Synoptics are in fact a kind of side-lights, which sufficiently show the accuracy of the substance of those discourses of Christ which are reported only by John. He set himself in his old age, under the guidance of the Spirit of promise, to gather from the wide field, rapidly passed over by his predecessors, some of those reminiscences of his Master which were specially dear to his own heart, and which he thought would be permanently valuable to his Christian brethren. The substance of his memoranda was perfect and absolute truth, while the form which they assumed was such as was dictated by the special purpose which he had in view, and by the providential circumstances in which he was placed.

"We need not, then, totally object to the comparison which M. Renan, following several other writers, insti-

tutes between Xenophon and the Synoptics on the one hand, and Plato and John on the other. To a certain extent the analogy is quite correct. The actual words of Socrates are no doubt more exactly reported to us by Xenophon than Plato. Yet it may be doubted if Plato has not, after all, given us a more full and faithful portraiture of Socrates, than, with all his mere verbal accuracy, we have from Xenophon. And so it is with the Gospels. John, like Plato, was probably more capable of fully understanding his Master than were the others, and with less literal exactness has nevertheless more accurately depicted the spiritual and divine aspects of the character of Christ. So far the analogy may be admitted. But if, as can hardly be doubted, Plato has in many instances only used his Master's name to give expression to his own thoughts, we find no reason for admitting any such supposition in reference to the fourth Gospel. The Christ whom it depicts is the same Christ whom we find in the Gospel of Matthew and in the Epistles of St Paul. The very same truths are announced both *of* Him and *by* Him; the only difference is, that the writer dwells more on the divine side of His character, and clothes in his own style and phraseology those profound lessons of wisdom to which he had listened from the Saviour's lips."¹

There is no denying that the discourses of Christ which are recorded in the fourth Gospel have a different

¹ Roberts's Discussions, pp. 512, 513.

dress from that which characterises those that are recorded in the Synoptic narratives, and it may be admitted that the Christ of John's Gospel is in some respects unlike the Christ of the Synoptics. In the Synoptics it is chiefly the human phase of Christ's character that is presented to us; in John it is principally the divine aspect of it. If the only portraiture we had of Christ were to be gathered from the earlier Gospels, it would be difficult to point out and put in the divine side of it. It is mostly and mainly His human relations they deal with and dwell on, and in the perusal of their pages we almost forget that, in listening to the words of the "meek and lowly" One—the humble teacher of Galilee—we are listening to the words of Him who is a partaker of the divine attributes, and a sharer of the divine eternity. They love to enlarge on Him as the babe of Bethlehem and the man of sorrows, and to represent Him as He was wont to appear among them in the mournful majesty of His humiliation. On the other hand, John dwells chiefly on the divine side, and what mainly occupies his pen and absorbs his sympathies are the higher and sublimer aspects of Christ's character. It almost seems as if it were John's prerogative to draw aside the veil in which Christ's glory was shrouded from mortal gaze, and to dwell with special prominence on the everlasting excellences of His divine nature. In John's Gospel, while the Christ of his pages speaks as never man spake, it

seems as if only the words were human in which the divine thoughts are clothed, or as if the veil of our adopted nature were too feeble to hide the deity that kindles into glory behind it. Jesus of Nazareth is the speaker, but the voice is charged with the echoes of eternity, and is emphasised with the accents of divinity. The ear may catch the utterances of a man, but the awed and fearful heart feels that the words are those of Him who is revealed to us as the Word of God, who was with God, and who is God. But while there is this difference in the representation of Christ with which the Gospel narratives furnish us, the conclusions which the adherents of the Tübingen school, whose ingenuity in finding objections is so keen-eyed, draw from this, are, we think, extreme and unwarranted. Let it be borne in mind that the Synoptic Gospels were suited for the Church in its infancy, but John's for the Church in its riper and maturer existence. They are equally based on the same great facts, and present the same great truths, yet the former may be characterised as chiefly historical, and the latter as mainly spiritual in their respective delineations of the divine personage. The simpler exhibition was intrusted to the earlier historians; but the deeper truth was committed to him whose testimony was not only of a later date, but the testimony also of a beloved disciple.

It should be remembered, as we have already observed, that it was late in life when John undertook this new

composition, and after the lapse of so many years—years, too, which had witnessed startling changes and had been crowded with marvellous events—it was almost impossible, humanly speaking, to recall in exact terms the utterances of Jesus, and to record them in the very words which fell from His lips. Accordingly, we find that in his Gospel narrative John avails himself of a liberty which we can easily appreciate, and which is not without precedent, and that in the discourses which he records there are forms of speech and elevations of thought which had grown out of the circumstances through which he had passed, and of the scenes in which he had mingled. But nothing could be more unfair and unreasonable than to conclude from this that the Gospel is not apostolic and genuine. There is nothing in the discourses which John relates that is contradictory of the contents of the Synoptic Gospels, and the difference in the phraseology is in our opinion no proof against the apostolic origin or historical character of our Gospel.

Having said so much about the alleged difference in the contents of the fourth Gospel from those of the Synoptics, it seems fitting to point out some of those affinities and coincidences which confessedly exist between the Johannine and the other narratives. These resemblances are numerous, and are scattered all over the Gospels. But we shall not attempt more than to produce a few instances.

The first we shall give is from the Baptist's testimony to Jesus as the Christ. On this point, the accounts of what the Baptist says, as given by the Synoptists, is uniform, and in these Christ is invariably spoken of as "One mightier than I" (Matt. iii. 11; Mark, i. 7; Luke, iii. 16). The fourth Gospel reports John's testimony in these words: "There standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose" (John, i. 26, 27). It is evident from this that the account which John gives of the Baptist's testimony strongly resembles the accounts which the others have transmitted, and at first sight we are almost disposed to infer either that the writers drew from a common source, or that the author of the fourth Gospel has quoted from the other three. But upon a closer examination of the respective narratives, it is obvious that in John's there is so much additional matter, which is narrated with such a variety of expression, that he must be ranked as a separate and independent witness. The fourth Gospel, for instance, informs us that the Baptist delivered his testimony to a deputation of priests and Levites from Jerusalem, while there is not a single word in the Synoptic records of any such deputation. It is affirmed, indeed, by Mr Tayler, that the fourth Gospel "omits all mention of the baptism of Jesus by John."¹ But this is surely shallow

¹ An Attempt, &c., p. 4.

and superficial criticism. It is true that the fourth Gospel does not expressly mention the fact of the baptism; but there are allusions to it which no one can mistake or misunderstand. This will appear, if we consider these words, "And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God" (John, i. 33, 34). On the whole, John's evidence as to the Baptist's testimony is strictly coincident with the other evidence. There is here, therefore, an unquestionable agreement between the Johannine and the Synoptic narratives.

The next instance we shall give of similarity or affinity in their writings is taken from what they teach as to the new birth or conversion. In John's Gospel Christ says, "Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Such is the Johannine form of Christ's words. But the words which St Matthew records as addressed by Christ to His disciples, though different in form, have precisely the same signification: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The meaning of these two verses is clearly identical, though the phraseology is somewhat different.

Another instance, and one which fully illustrates what we are attempting to show, is found in connection

with the high priest's servant, whose ear Peter cut off. The Synoptists all mention the fact of Peter's attack upon the servant. St Luke enters more into detail, and says it was his *right* ear. John also records what Peter did, but gives a still fuller account than any of the Synoptists. He not only tells us that Peter cut off the servant's ear, not only says with Luke that it was his *right* ear, but gives us the further information that the "servant's name was Malchus." It is evident from this that John's narrative has coincidences with the others ; and also, from the additional matter he gives, that he is to be regarded as an independent witness.

The following verses, which we place in parallel columns, will show that the doctrinal teaching of John is in perfect harmony with that of the Synoptists :—

ST MATT. iii. 11.

He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.

ST MATT. vii. 19.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

ST MARK, ii. 12.

We never saw it on this fashion.

ST JOHN, i. 33.

The same is He which baptiseth with the Holy Ghost.

ST JOHN, xv. 2.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away. . . . If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered ; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

ST JOHN, ix. 32.

Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

ST MARK, xvi. 16.

He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

ST LUKE, ii. 32.

A light to lighten the *Gentiles*, and the glory of Thy people *Israel*.

ST LUKE, ii. 47.

And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.

ST JOHN, iii. 36.

He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life : and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life ; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

ST JOHN, i. 9.

That was the true Light, which lighteth *every man* that cometh into the world.

ST JOHN, vii. 15.

And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ?

There are numerous other passages which show a similarity no less striking, but these are sufficient to illustrate the statement we have made, that there are many affinities and coincidences between the fourth Gospel and the other three. It follows from all this, that if there are differences in the Gospel narratives, there are also similarities and coincidences ; and it seems to us that the differences and the resemblances which exist between John's Gospel and the other three, are not greater or more remarkable than what might be expected in separate and independent narratives of the same historical personage.

3. Another objection brought against our Gospel is, that it differs from the other Gospels as to the scene and duration of Christ's ministry. There are few questions that have occupied more attention and occa-

sioned more controversy than these: Where did Christ commence His ministry? and, How long did His ministry last? It is held by some that Christ's public ministry, which began with His baptism and closed with His crucifixion, was confined to Galilee, and that at the end He made His one solitary journey to Jerusalem, to be present at that Passover feast at which He suffered. They argue that the first three Gospels distinctly teach this exclusive Galilean ministry, and this single visit to the national festival; and they contend that John's Gospel, in which there are references to other and earlier journeys, is historically untrue, and therefore they discredit its apostolic authorship. This is the opinion of Weisse, Baur, and others, who, though differing in some respects, agree in this, that the accounts of Christ's ministry in the fourth Gospel and in the Synoptic Gospels are contradictory; and the conclusion they come to is, that the fourth Gospel is not an authentic or apostolic work. The author of 'Supernatural Religion' says: "The Synoptics clearly represent the ministry of Jesus as having been limited to a single year, and His preaching is confined to Galilee and Jerusalem, where His career culminates at the fatal Passover. The fourth Gospel distributes the teaching of Jesus between Galilee, Samaria, and Jerusalem, makes it extend at least over three years, and refers to three Passovers spent by Jesus at Jerusalem. The Fathers felt this difficulty, and expended a good deal of apologetic ingenuity upon

it; but no one is now content with the explanation of Eusebius, that the Synoptics merely intended to write the history of Jesus during the one year after the imprisonment of the Baptist, whilst the fourth evangelist recounted the events of the time not recorded by the others—a theory which is totally contradicted by the four Gospels themselves.”¹ The words of Mr Tayler are to the same effect: “Instead of postponing the commencement of Christ’s ministry,” he says, “till John was cast into prison, the fourth evangelist describes it as subsisting for some time side by side with that of John’s, the two preachers baptising together in the same neighbourhood (John, iii. 22, 23). Instead of cautiously advancing His claims, and only towards the close of His ministry distinctly announcing Himself as the Christ, Jesus, in the fourth Gospel, from the very first reveals His high character and office by an unreserved disclosure of the Divine Word that was incarnate in Him, and engaged in open discussion respecting His claims to authority with the Jews at Jerusalem and elsewhere (John, i. 2, 3).”²

In reference to this quotation, in which Mr Tayler seems to insinuate that in the Synoptic narratives Jesus is represented as “cautiously advancing His claims,” it is sufficient to reply that nothing could be more gratuitous and ungenerous than this insinuation. The fact is, that so far from “cautiously advancing His claims,”

¹ Sup. Relig., ii. 451.

² An Attempt, &c., p. 4.

Luke tells us that in His very first appearance at Nazareth, the city of His early life, He laid claim plainly and publicly to be the party spoken of by the prophet; and a higher claim He never advanced in John's Gospel, even when He proclaimed Himself to the Jews of Jerusalem to be "the Light of the world." And in Matthew's Gospel, Christ, speaking "as one having authority," says, "Many will say unto *me* in that day, Lord, Lord," &c. (Matt. vii. 22). This language, it will be confessed, is not the language of caution or reserve, and clearly means that He who uttered it announced Himself, as He did so, to be the Judge of our humanity. It will be seen, therefore, that in the Synoptics as well as in John, Christ proclaimed His purpose, and called upon men to consider His claim to be the Messiah promised to the fathers. But apart from this, if we enter upon the investigation without prepossession or prejudice, and if our only object is to arrive at correct conclusions, we will find reasons for thinking, not only that John's account of Christ's repeated journeys to Jerusalem is not at variance with the other narratives, but is confirmed by what they teach us. First of all, if we bear in mind that Jesus did not enter upon His public ministry in Galilee till after the imprisonment of the Baptist, it is, to say the least, most unlikely that He would allow the interval between His baptism and the imprisonment of John to pass away in secrecy and inactivity. There is no reason for thinking that John's

imprisonment took place immediately after the baptism of Jesus. On the contrary, there is nothing improbable in the supposition that some months, if not years, may have intervened ; and if so, it is not at all likely that in the interval Christ was living in retirement, and giving no sign of the power which it was His mission to manifest, or of the purpose which it was His errand to fulfil. It is true, indeed, that the Synoptists give us no direct information about His ministry during this period ; but John tells us, and we accept John's testimony not only as probable but as true, that He was making repeated visits to Jerusalem, and was striving to convince the Jews in their chief city of the divinity of His mission. But though there are no direct accounts in the Synoptic Gospels of Christ's labours during this period, there are yet hints, references, and statements which seem to confirm John's testimony, and which have no meaning except on the supposition that during His public ministry Jesus paid visits, more or less frequent, and of longer or shorter duration, to the city of their solemnities ; and did so for the purpose of preaching to its inhabitants, and of converting them to the truth. It may be admitted that if these passages are taken singly and separately, they may not seem sufficiently cogent and conclusive ; but if we group them together, and consider them collectively, they can hardly fail to satisfy us that they are coincident with John's narrative, and confirmatory of his statements. The first passage we will refer to, in

proof of this, is Christ's Sermon on the Mount. In that sermon Christ speaks of those who "break commandments and teach men so;" "who blow trumpets before them when they bestow their alms;" "who love to pray standing in the corners of streets;" and who are so defective in righteousness as to forbid the hope of their entering by means of it into the kingdom of heaven. Now it may well be asked, of whom was it that Christ spake in these words? It could not surely have been of the simple villagers of Galilee; it must have been of those men whose "false teaching and hollow piety" had, according to John's Gospel, so often grieved Him during His repeated visits to Judea and Jerusalem. It is probable that, in announcing His claims to be the Messiah, He had often entered into controversies with the Scribes and Pharisees; and these references in Matthew's Gospel seem to be the expressions of His holy indignation against men who, He foresaw, would, for His sake, persecute and say all manner of evil against His disciples. It is not, however, easy to see how it could be said "for my sake," if He had not on previous occasions met with those men, and by His censure and condemnation aroused their enmity. The only way we can explain the existing enmity between Jesus and the Jews, of whose existence we have evidence in the Sermon on the Mount, and in other passages of the Synoptic Gospels, is by accepting John's account of Christ's previous visits to Jerusalem in the discharge of His divine mission. It

is not the fact, therefore, as Mr Tayler would have us to believe, that the fourth Gospel "stands out in direct contrast and contradiction to the three first."

But there is other and stronger evidence than any we have yet adduced to show that in the Synoptic Gospels there are hints that Christ's visit to Jerusalem, when He was betrayed to be crucified, was not His first visit to the holy city, or His first interview with the priests and princes of Judea. If we are prepared to adopt the opinion of Weisse and others, we must also be prepared first of all to blot out the following passages,—Luke, xix. 41, 42; Matt. xxii. 37, 38; and Luke, xiii. 34, 35. In the first of these passages Luke represents Christ as weeping when He beheld the city, and saying: "If thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace; but now they are hid from thine eyes." Now, if these words have any emphasis, it rests on the fact that "the things belonging to their peace" had been put within their reach and pressed upon their acceptance, but that they had rejected the heavenly offer, and spurned from them the heavenly grace. They evidently mean that they had sinned away the time of their merciful visitation, and by their unbelief had rejected Heaven's bounty. Then in the parallel passages of Matthew and Luke, which we have referred to above, after uttering severe denunciations against the Scribes and Pharisees in the Temple, Christ thus apostrophises their city: "O Jerusalem,

Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" These words, which occur in both Gospels, though not in the same connection, are evidently addressed to the inhabitants of Jerusalem; but it is not possible to understand how it could be said that He had often attempted to gather them if He had been a stranger among them, and if this His last visit to their city had also been His first. The only satisfactory explanation of this language that can be given is to be found in the fact of His former visits, and therefore we are forced to the conclusion that Christ's tears and bewailments are the expressions of His regret that those invitations which He had oft repeated had been as oft rejected; and that these invitations had been made during those journeys to Jerusalem which are recorded by John, and which, though not plainly stated, are yet inferentially confirmed by the Synoptists. It is no answer, and certainly no argument, to say with Baur, that the expression "thy children" refers to the Jews in general, and not specially to the Jews that dwelt in Jerusalem. No one will accept of this explanation, and Baur himself had to abandon it. The words of Strauss are most appropriate—the best we can employ here. "Here," he says, "all subterfuges are vain; and we must confess, if these are really the words of Jesus, He must

have been in Jerusalem oftener and longer than would appear from the accounts in the Synoptics." There are other passages which are inferentially confirmatory of John's account, and we may give as an instance the words in Matt. xxvii. 57, from which we learn that Joseph of Arimathea was a disciple of Christ. Joseph's residence, however, was in Jerusalem, and he had a grave there; and it is probable, therefore, that he had met with Jesus on His previous visits, and had thus learned to appreciate His mission and to accept His mercy. Then, again, it is evident from Luke, x. 38-42, that Jesus had been intimate with the family at Bethany; but it is difficult to account for this intimacy, except on the supposition that He had repeatedly visited the vicinity of the capital. On the occasion of these visits He had gained their acquaintance and won their confidence; and to their home He was wont to retire after His disputations with the rulers of Jerusalem. On the whole, we cannot conclude this section better than in these well-expressed sentences: "If it be still urged, Why has not Matthew and his co-evangelists given us some more definite account of these early but post-baptismal visits of Jesus to Judea and Jerusalem than such obscure references? the answer is at once obvious: Matthew was at this time a tax-gatherer in Capernaum, sitting at the receipt of custom. Perhaps he took but little interest in the movements of Jesus at the time. He is badly prepared to write that portion

of the history, and therefore wisely confined himself to things he had himself observed either before or subsequent to his calling. Peter, who is supposed to have been the source of Mark's testimony, was also at this time pursuing the occupation of fisherman on the lake. Luke has collected the materials of his history evidently from such Galilean sources. But John, who was also a fisherman on the lake, is a young man of pious disposition, as evinced by his being a disciple of the Baptist before he was known to Christ: beloved by Him afterwards, he had early learned to appreciate the true nobility of His character, and may have been repeatedly His companion on their visits to their nation's festivals. In writing his narrative, therefore, he gives us his experience of Him, even 'from the beginning;' and because it is more full, appreciative, and spiritual, are we to reject it as unworthy of our confidence?"¹

4. The next and last objection we shall refer to is that which has been raised in connection with the day on which Christ was crucified, and on which the Last Supper took place. This question has long agitated the Christian Church. It has occasioned much controversy in past ages, and in all likelihood it will continue to furnish a subject for disputation for ages to come. It might have been expected that the narratives of the evangelists would have made any dispute unnecessary, and that their accounts would have been

¹ ORR—Authenticity of John's Gospel, p. 17.

so clear as to be incapable of misconstruction. But it is not so ; and it is their apparent discrepancy that has occasioned the controversy. There are several points in connection with this matter on which their testimony is unanimous and unmistakable. They all agree that Christ partook of His last meal on Thursday, that He was crucified on Friday, that He rested in His grave on the Sabbath, and that He rose again on the first day of the week. But though they are agreed as to the day of the week on which He was crucified, they appear to be at variance as to the day of the month. The Synoptists apparently teach us that our Lord's last meal was the legal Jewish paschal supper, and consequently that His crucifixion took place on the 15th Nisan. On the other hand, according to John's testimony, it appears that on Friday, the day of our Lord's crucifixion, the regular and legal celebration of the Passover had not taken place, and consequently that he was crucified on the 14th Nisan. The following passages, in which the evangelists narrate the events connected with the Last Supper and with Christ's death, will show what they teach us on these two points: "Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?" (Matt. xxvi. 17.) "And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt

Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the Passover?" (Mark, xiv. 12.) "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed" (Luke, xxii. 7). "Now, before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end. And supper being ended" (John, xiii. 1, 2). "They themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover" (John, xviii. 28). "The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day, (for that Sabbath-day was an high day,)" &c. (John, xix. 31):

If we carefully examine these passages, it will appear that, according to Matthew, it was on "the first day of the feast of unleavened bread" (πρώτη τῶν ἀζύμων); according to Mark, it was "the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover;" and according to Luke, it was "the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed," and consequently in the afternoon of the 14th Nisan, that Jesus told His disciples to make ready the Passover, and that it was in the evening before the 15th that He ate it with them. But according to John, the Last Supper took place "*before* the feast of the Passover," and the Jews would not go into the prætorium on the day that Jesus was put to death, "that they might not be defiled, but might eat the Passover."

It appears from this, therefore, that the Jewish Pass-over was not eaten till the evening after the death of Jesus, that Christ's Last Supper took place in the evening following the 13th Nisan, and that He was crucified in the afternoon of the 14th. Besides this, John tells us that the day on which Jesus died was the *παρασκευή*, the day of preparation for the 15th Nisan, the first feast-day; and from this it is evident that, according to John's testimony, Christ was crucified on the 14th Nisan. The following tables will place before us more clearly what the apparent differences between the Synoptists and John are:—

SYNOPTISTS.			
Thursday.	14th Nisan.	Last Supper.	Jewish paschal meal.
Friday.	15th Nisan.	Crucifixion.	First Sabbath of feast.
Sabbath.	16th Nisan.	In sepulchre.	
Sunday.	17th Nisan.	Resurrection.	
JOHN.			
Thursday.	13th Nisan.	Last Supper.	Jewish paschal meal.
Friday.	14th Nisan.	Crucifixion.	
Sabbath.	15th Nisan.	In sepulchre.	First Sabbath of feast.
Sunday.	16th Nisan.	Resurrection.	

Or more simply thus :—

SYNOPTISTS.	JOHN.
14th. Paschal meal.	13th. Last Supper.
15th. Crucifixion.	14th. Crucifixion — paschal meal.
16th. Sabbath.	15th. Sabbath.

In the foregoing statements and tables it will be sufficiently seen what the points of difference in the Gospel records are, and it now remains for us to endeavour to remove or reconcile these differences. Before entering upon the discussion, it is important, with a view to a better understanding of the matter in hand, to notice briefly a few particulars regarding the institution of the Passover feast, and the ceremonies connected with it. In doing so we shall appeal largely to the Bible, and avail ourselves also of those means of information which are at our command.

1. *The Name.*

The name signifies : 1. An overstepping or passover, and is so rendered by Joseph., Antiq. ii. 14, 6, translation by Whiston ; 2. The paschal sacrifice, by virtue of which, according to divine appointment, the *passing over* was effected (Exod. xii. 21, 27, 48 ; 2 Chron. xxx. 18) ; 3. The paschal meal, which took place on

the evening of the 14th Nisan; and, 4. The whole festival of unleavened bread, which began with the paschal meal (Deut. xvi. 1, 3, with Ezek. xlv. 21).

2. *Time of Killing the Lamb.*

In the words of the institution, it was appointed that the head of each family was to select a male lamb or goat of the first year (Exod. xii. 5, 6), and that this selection was to be made on the tenth day of the month Nisan (Exod. xii. 3). It was also ordained that the lamb or goat so selected was to be killed on the 14th day of the same month, and that it was to be killed "between the two evenings" (Exod. xii. 6; Lev. xxiii. 5; Num. ix. 3, 5), or, as we have it in Deut. xvi. 6, "at even, at the going down of the sun." The phrase "between the two evenings" is also used to denote the time at which the daily evening sacrifice was to be offered (Exod. xxix. 39, 41; Num. xxviii. 4). There has been no small dispute as to the significance of the phrase, "between the two evenings." The Samaritans, the Karaites, Aben Ezra, and most modern commentators, understood it to signify between six and seven o'clock. But the Pharisees and Rabbis, according to the Mishna (Pesachim, v. 3), held that the first evening began with the declining sun (Greek, *δεληγοψια*). According to them, therefore, the paschal lamb was to be killed between the ninth and the eleventh hour, or,

according to our reckoning, between 3 and 5 o'clock P.M. It is plain from Joseph., B. J. vi. 9, 3, that in the time of our Lord it was at this time "from the ninth hour till the eleventh" that the sacrifices were slain. The daily evening sacrifice in the Temple, as we learn from the same historian, was also offered at the ninth hour (Antiq., xiv. 4, 3). It is evident, then, from all this, that the time of killing the Passover was between the ninth and eleventh hour, or towards sunset, and near the close of the 14th day of Nisan.

3. *Time of Eating the Passover.*

It appears from Exod. xii. 8 that the Passover was to be eaten the same night in which the paschal lamb was killed. "And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it." In Egypt, where the Israelites ate their first Passover, each family slew their victim, then struck the blood on their door-posts, and in the morning, after the slaughter of the first-born of Egypt, they broke up from Rameses on their way to the Red Sea. "They departed from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, on the morrow after the Passover" (Num. xxxiii. 3).

It is evident from these statements that the paschal lamb was to be slain in the afternoon of the fourteenth day of the month, and was to be eaten in the same

evening—the evening, that is, on which, according to Jewish reckoning, the fifteenth day began.

4. *Feast of Unleavened Bread.*

“In the first month, on the *fourteenth* day of the month, at even, ye shall eat unleavened bread until the one-and-twentieth day of the month at even. Seven days there shall no leaven be found in your houses” (Exod. xii. 18, 19, with Deut. xvi. 2, 4). “And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the Lord; seven days ye must eat unleavened bread” (Lev. xxiii. 6, with Num. xxviii. 17). From these passages it appears that the feast of unleavened bread began with the Passover meal at or after sunset on the fourteenth day, and lasted till the end of the twenty-first day.

In order fully to observe these instructions, the Jews were accustomed at or before noon on the *fourteenth* day of Nisan to cease from labour, and to put away all leaven out of their houses. On that day too, about sunset, the paschal lamb was killed, and was eaten in the evening. It thus came to pass that this fourteenth day itself, which was a day of preparation for the festival, was sometimes regarded as forming part of the festival, and is spoken of in the New Testament as “the *first* day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover” (Mark, xiv. 12; Luke, xxii. 7; Matt.

xxvi. 7). Josephus mentions that the fourteenth day was sometimes included in the days of the feast (Antiq., iii. 10, 5; B. J., v. 3, 1; Antiq., xi. 4, 8).

5. *Other Paschal Sacrifices.*

(1.) 15th Nisan.—On this day there was a holy convocation, and no work was allowed to be done. The only exception was the permission to prepare necessary food (Exod. xii. 16; Lev. xxiii. 7; Num. xxviii. 18). On this day, in addition to the ordinary daily sacrifices of the Temple, there were offered two young bullocks, a ram, and seven lambs of the first year, with meat-offerings for a burnt-offering, and a goat for a sin-offering (Num. xxviii. 18, 24). “Besides these public sacrifices, there were the voluntary offerings which were made by every private individual who appeared before the Lord in Jerusalem, in accordance with the injunction in Exod. xxiii. 15; Deut. xvi. 16. The Jewish canons ordained that this freewill-offering from every attendant at the sanctuary (רִאיוֹנִים) was to be a threefold one: 1st, A burnt-offering of not less in value than one *meah* silver = 16 grains of corn; 2d, A festive-offering, called *Chagiga* (חֲגִיגָה), of not less value than two *meahs* = 32 grains of corn; and, 3d, A peace or joyful offering (Deut. xxvii. 7), the value of which was entirely left to be determined by the goodwill of the offerer, according to Deut. xvi. 16. The two last were

alike, denominated *peace-offerings*. They were generally offered on the first day of the festival, and if any one failed to bring them on this day, they might be brought on any other day of the festival; but if they were neglected during the festival, they could not be offered afterwards (*Chagiga*, i. 6; Maimonides, *Hilchoth Chagiga*, i. 4, 5). Those who contracted any legal impurity were not allowed to offer the *Chagiga* (*Mishna*, *Pesachim*), vi. 3. The victim, which might be taken either from the flock or the herd, and might be either a male or female, had to be without blemish, and was slain in the court of the sanctuary by the offerer, who laid his hand upon its head. The blood was sprinkled on the altar; the inside fat, with the kidneys, was burned by the priests, who took the breast as a wave-offering, and the right shoulder as a heave-offering (Lev. iii. 1-5, vii. 29-34), whilst the remainder belonged to the offerer, who might eat it with his guests during two days and one night; but if any portion of it was left till the third day after the animal was slain, it had to be burned (Lev. vii. 16-18; *Mishna*, *Pesachim*, vi. 4). The *Chagiga* could not be offered on a Sabbath, but it might be slain on the fourteenth of Nisan, if the paschal lamb was insufficient for the number of those who fixed to eat it (*Pesachim*, vi. 3)."¹

(2.) 16th Nisan.—On this day the first-fruits of the harvest were offered, and a lamb for a burnt-offering

¹ Kitto's Cyclo. Bib. Lit., iii. 428.

(Lev. xxiii. 10-12). The grain offered was barley, as it ripened before the wheat (Exod. ix. 31, 32; 2 Sam. xxi. 9; Ruth, xi. 23; 2 Kings, iv. 42). Until this offering was made, no husbandman was allowed to begin his harvest, nor was any one permitted to eat of the new grain (Lev. xxiii. 14). It was therefore a rite of great importance, and in the time of our Lord, and later, was celebrated with the following ceremony: Delegates from the Sanhedrim went into a field near Jerusalem a day before the festival, towards the end of the fifteenth of Nisan, and tied together the ears in bundles, so that they might easily be cut. On the afternoon of the sixteenth, or, as some think, early on that day, the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns assembled together, and when the reaping began, inaugurated the work amidst great tumult. When cut it was laid in boxes, brought into the court of the Temple, then thrashed with canes and stalks that the grain might not be crushed, and laid on a roast with holes, that the fire might touch each grain. It was then ground in a hand-mill and sifted thirteen times. Of the flour the tenth part of an ephah or an omer was mixed with oil and frankincense for a wave-offering, one handful of which was burnt upon the altar, and the rest eaten by the priests (Lev. ii. 15, iii. 16).

(3.) 17th to 20th Nisan.—From the 17th to the 20th was half-holyday. The people either left Jerusalem and returned to their respective homes; or

they remained, and indulged in public amusements, &c.

(4.) 21st Nisan.—On the last day of the festival, as on the first, there was a holy convocation.

In this way and after this manner they celebrated the Passover, the greatest, the most interesting as well as the most important, of the three great annual feasts of the Jews.

6. *Paschal Supper.*

When the Passover was originally instituted, the instructions for its observance were very minute and detailed. Some of these, however, could only have been designed with special reference to its observance in Egypt, and were suited to the particular circumstances in which the Jews were then placed. For instance, they were commanded to choose their lambs on the tenth day of the month, and to keep them till the fourteenth, a command which it was wellnigh impossible to observe after their settlement in Palestine. They were also ordered to collect the blood of the slain lamb, and to sprinkle it upon their door-posts, which in their altered circumstances it was not possible for them to do. Then they were instructed to eat the lamb in haste and standing, as if on the eve of starting on a journey—an instruction which was not attended to in Christ's time, who, with His disciples, partook of the meal at their leisure, and in a reclining position. And

further, they were forbidden to leave their house before morning, for fear of the destroying angel, a prohibition for which in subsequent commemorations there was no necessity. In corroboration of this statement, and in elucidation of the practice which prevailed in the observance of this feast after its first institution, we shall quote the words of Dr Robinson, who says :—

“Some of these particulars would seem to have been intended only for the first Passover in Egypt, and could not well have had place afterwards. Thus when, in later times, crowds went up to Jerusalem to keep this festival, arriving there a day, or two days perhaps, before the fourteenth, and purchasing their lambs of the traders in and around the Temple, a previous selection on the tenth was out of the question. As, too, they were strangers in the city, and the lamb was slain in the court of the Temple, the smiting of the blood upon the door-posts of other men's houses could hardly have been a matter of custom. Instead also of eating in haste, prepared as for a journey, the Jews in our Saviour's time, and our Lord with His disciples, ate at their leisure, reclining at table in the Roman manner. So, further, instead of not going out of the house before morning, which the Hebrews in Egypt were forbidden to do for fear of the destroying angel, the later Jews, inasmuch as no such reason existed afterwards, disregarded the prohibition; and our Lord and His disciples went out the same evening over the brook Kidron.

“That the Jews, in the course of many centuries, had introduced various additional ceremonies along with the eating of the paschal supper, is evident from the manner in which our Lord celebrated it, as narrated by the evangelists. What all these rites were, we have no specific historical account from any contemporary writer. Yet the precept as to the manner of holding the meal, preserved in the Mishnah and Talmud of Jerusalem—which were compiled in the third century, in the school at Tiberias, from the traditional teaching of earlier Rabbins, and have been illustrated and explained by successive Jewish commentators—although they cannot be depended upon as contemporaneous testimony, do nevertheless serve to throw light upon some of the circumstances connected with the institution of the Lord’s Supper, and may therefore properly find a place here.

“According to these authorities, four cups of red wine, usually mingled with one-fourth part of water, were drunk during the meal, and served to mark its progress. The first cup being prepared, the master of the family opened the meal with a blessing upon the day and upon the wine, and so the *first* cup was drunk; apparently the same mentioned in Luke, xxii. 17. All now washed their hands, the master at the same time giving thanks. Then bitter herbs were brought in, dipped in vinegar or salt water; of which they tasted meanwhile until the proper paschal dishes were served

—viz., the unleavened bread and roasted lamb; and further, the Khagigah of the fourteenth day, and a broth or sauce (חרוֹסֶת) made with spices (*Pesach*. ii. 8). The master of the house now pronounced a blessing over the bitter herbs, and ate of them dipped in the sauce, as did also the rest. After this the second cup was filled; the son inquired of the father the meaning of this celebration; and the latter instructed him as to his significancy, pointing out and explaining in their order the lamb, the bitter herbs, and the unleavened bread, &c. Then was repeated the first part of the Hallel or song of praise (*Ps.* cxiii., cxiv.) The *second* cup was now drunk. The master of the family next took two cakes of the unleavened bread, broke one of them in two, and laid it upon the other, yet unbroken, and pronounced a blessing upon the bread. He then took a piece of the broken bread, wrapped it in bitter herbs, dipped it in the sauce, gave thanks, and ate it. Then followed the blessing upon the Khagigah, of which he ate a morsel; and finally, the blessing upon the paschal lamb, of which he ate in like manner. Thereupon began the actual meal, in which they ate this or that as they pleased, and at their leisure, partaking of the herbs, of the bread dipped in the sauce, of the flesh of the Khagigah, and lastly of the paschal lamb; after which last they ate nothing more. The eating being thus finished, the master of the family washed his hands and gave thanks for the meal. Next followed

the giving of thanks over the *third* cup, called כוס הברכה, *the cup of blessing*, which was now drunk (compare the cup in the Eucharist, and also τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας, 1 Cor. x. 16). Upon this the fourth cup having been filled, the remainder of the Hallel (Ps. cxv.-cxviii.) was repeated, and the *fourth* cup was drunk. This was ordinarily the end of the celebration. But the Jews have a tradition, that when the guests were disposed to repeat further the great Hallel (Ps. cxx.-cxxxvii.), a *fifth* cup might thereupon be added.

“It is obvious that the first cup spoken of above corresponds to that mentioned in Luke, xxii. 17; and that the institution of the Lord’s Supper probably took place at the close of the proper meal, immediately before the third cup or ‘cup of blessing,’ which would seem to have made part of it (compare 1 Cor. x. 16).”¹

Let us now return to the consideration of the question, Did the crucifixion of our Lord precede the Jewish paschal meal according to John, or follow it according to the Synoptists? In other words, was the Friday on which Christ was crucified the 14th or 15th of Nisan? As we have seen, there is a discrepancy, whether real or apparent, between the Synoptists and John on these points. The adherents of the Tübingen school and other opponents of our Gospel have seized upon this variance in the Gospel narratives, and press it as a

¹ Discrepancy between John and the other Evangelists, in Brit. and For. Rev., ii. 360, 361.

proof that John's account is the wrong one, and inferentially that his Gospel is not genuine. There is no denying that if the account given by the fourth Gospel can be shown to be inaccurate, it will go far to prove that it is not an apostolic production. If, according to what is seemingly the Synoptic account, Christ was crucified on the 15th Nisan, and partook of the Last Supper at the time legally fixed for the Passover celebration, it is difficult to see how an apostle, and an eye-witness too of what is recorded, could have published an account which is so much at variance with their testimony, and which he must have known to be erroneous. Bretschneider and others have not failed to make the most of this, and to find here an evidence that the fourth Gospel is not the genuine work of the Apostle John. Mr Tayler expresses very clearly the views which are held by those who find in this apparent discrepancy an objection to the genuineness of our Gospel, and says: "By far the most extraordinary divergency between the three first Gospels and the fourth relates to the time and the circumstances of the Last Supper. It is necessary to understand distinctly wherein the divergency consists. Each of the Synoptists, in the most explicit terms, describes Jesus as partaking of the Jewish Passover with His disciples in the usual manner, on the evening of the 14th of the month Nisan; and at the conclusion of the Supper, in the breaking of bread and distribution of wine, institut-

ing a memorial of Himself. Let the following passages be noticed: Matt. xxvi. 17-29; Mark, xiv. 12-26; Luke, xxii. 7-20. Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23-36), by recording the institution almost in the words of Luke, bears indirectly his testimony to the correctness of the Synoptical account. According to this, Jesus was crucified on the 15th of Nisan, the first entire day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The memorial then instituted has continued—with widely-varying significance, it is true—as a standing ordinance of the Christian Church to the present day.

“Now let us turn to the fourth Gospel, and see what account it gives of this matter. In the opening verse of chapter xiii. we are told that the Supper was ‘before the Feast of the Passover;’ and to exclude all possibility of mistake, we are further told (xiii. 29) that at the conclusion of the Supper some words spoken by Jesus to Judas were understood to be an instruction to him to buy what was necessary for the celebration of the feast. In this narrative not a word is said of the commemorative institution of breaking bread and distributing wine; but in place of it a symbolical act is introduced—the washing of the disciples’ feet by Christ—to which the Synoptists do not once refer, and for which, indeed, they leave no room. Had we only the fourth Gospel, we could never have known that Christ had instituted any memorial of Himself like that described in the Synoptists, and how it became an usage

in the Church, would have remained inexplicable. According to the fourth Gospel, then, the Supper must have taken place not on the 14th, but on the 13th of Nisan, and Christ Himself have suffered on the 14th, the same day on the eve of which the Passover was celebrated. That this was the meaning of the writer is evident from two passages in the sequel of the narrative: first (xviii. 28), where we are told that the Jews, when they led Jesus from Caiaphas to Pilate, would not enter the heathen judgment-hall, lest they should disqualify themselves by defilement for eating the Passover; and, secondly (xix. 14), where it is expressly stated that at the time of the crucifixion 'it was the preparation for the Passover.' The two narratives, therefore, are utterly incapable of reconciliation."¹ The author of 'Supernatural Religion' takes up the same objection, deals with the same difficulty, and says: "The Synoptics represent most clearly that Jesus on the evening of the 14th Nisan, after the custom of the Jews, ate the Passover with His disciples, and that He was arrested in the first hours of the 15th Nisan, the day on which He was put to death. Nothing can be more distinct than the statement that the Last Supper was the paschal feast. 'They made ready the Passover (*ἡτοίμασαν τὸ πάσχα*); and when the hour was come, He sat down, and the apostles with Him; and he said to them, With desire I have desired to eat this Pass-

¹ An Attempt, &c., pp. 99-101.

over with you before I suffer.' (*Ἐπιθυμία ἐπεθύμησα τοῦτο τὸ πάσχα φαγεῖν μεθ' ὑμῶν πρὸ τοῦ με παθεῖν*). The fourth Gospel, however, in accordance with the principle which is dominant throughout, represents the last repast which Jesus eats with His disciples as a common supper (*δεῖπνον*) which takes place not on the 14th but on the 13th Nisan, the day before the Feast of the Passover (*πρὸ τῆς ἑορτῆς τοῦ πάσχα*), and His death takes place on the 14th, the day on which the paschal lamb was slain."¹

In these extracts we have an explicit statement of the discrepancy which is held to exist between John's account and that of the Synoptists, and of that difference between the two narratives which, as is alleged, it is impossible to reconcile. But with this view we cannot sympathise; and after a careful study of the evangelists, and of the writings we have perused on the subject, we do not hesitate to conclude that John's account is the true one, and that even in the Synoptists there are hints or expressions in support of our conclusion. The reasons which have influenced us are briefly these. There is, first of all, what Bleek calls "internal probability;" and under this head we observe that the 15th Nisan was, according to the law, to be regarded as a Sabbath, and during its continuance everything in the way of worldly business was to be suspended. The only difference between it and the weekly Sabbath was, that "what every man must eat" might be prepared on the

¹ Sup. Relig., ii. 455.

15th Nisan (Exod. xii. 16), though in Lev. xxiii. 7; Num. xxviii. 18, there is no reference to this exception. Now there is no denying that in subsequent times, and beyond all doubt in the time of Christ, the 15th Nisan was kept with the greatest strictness, and in full accordance with the requirements of the law. It is highly improbable, therefore, that "upon that day, and during the preceding night which belonged to it, and shared its sabbatical character," all was done by the High Council in Jerusalem which, according to the Synoptists, must have been done if Christ was crucified on the 15th Nisan. These things must have taken place: The Sanhedrim must have met; an armed band must have been sent to arrest Jesus; the arrest must have taken place; the Sanhedrim must again have met in connection with His trial; and finally, there must have been the crucifixion on Calvary. Now it is not at all probable that the Jews, who had such a profound regard for the strict observance of their great feast day—a day which in most respects was sacred as a Sabbath—would have allowed these things to occur on the night of their great national solemnity. The internal probability, therefore, is adverse to the Synoptic account, and in favour of that which we have in the fourth Gospel.

But, as we have said, there are some expressions in the Synoptic Gospels which appear to confirm John's testimony, or at all events are most in keeping with John's account. It is recorded, for instance, in Matt.

xxvi. 5 ; Mark xiv. 2, that the Sanhedrim resolved to take Jesus by craft, and to put him to death ; but, they added, "Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people." If, however, we examine the Synoptic narratives, it will appear that, according to them, it was precisely on the feast day, and *after* "they had killed the Passover," that Jesus was arrested. Then in Luke, xxiii. 26, 27, the Galilean women are represented as having prepared spices on the day preceding the Sabbath, which they would not have done if that day had been the 15th Nisan. It is an important fact, too, that Jewish tradition teaches us that the death of Jesus took place on the eve of the Passover ("vespera paschatis" or ἡ παρασκευή τοῦ πάσχα). The great mass of Christian tradition, also, that has come down to us, bears the same testimony. The 'Chronicon Paschale,' a work of the seventh century, has a number of quotations from the early Fathers in its introductory pages, and in these it is distinctly stated that the crucifixion took place on Nisan 14, and superseded for ever the offering of the paschal lamb. If, then, we put all these statements together, and consider them fairly and without partiality, it seems to us that they furnish confirmatory evidence of the correctness of John's account ; and, to use the words of one who has written exhaustively on the subject, "we can hardly refuse, in the face of these, to accept the Johannean date of the Last Supper and the crucifixion as the right one."

But as the point under discussion is a very important one, and is held to have an essential bearing on the authenticity of John's Gospel, it may be well to state more fully, even at the risk of occasional repetition, the reasons which have forced us to accept of John's version as the correct one. It is not to be forgotten, then, that John's account of the Last Supper was written at a period considerably posterior to that of the Synoptists, and narrates more fully the circumstances that accompanied its celebration. In addition to this, let it be remembered that John lived in more intimate relationship to Christ in those tragic scenes which culminated in the crucifixion than the other evangelists did—a fact which increases the interest as well as the value of his testimony. Then, again, though it is conceivable that in the lapse of time the Last Supper might have begun to be associated even in the minds of the evangelists with the paschal meal, and that in their writings it may have been made to appear as having been celebrated on the same day; yet it is not conceivable, except on the supposition that the distinction is real, that John would have been careful to distinguish the one feast from the other. For these reasons we are disposed to accept of John's account as strictly reliable, and as historically accurate.

It is evident too, from the sacred narratives, that the Friday, on which day Christ was crucified, was not observed with any special solemnity, but, on the

contrary, was spent by the people in their usual occupations ; but if that Friday had been the first day of the feast, it would have been spent very differently, and kept with the usual solemnities. We do not contend that the feast Sabbaths were regarded with as much solemnity, and were kept with as much strictness, as the weekly Sabbath, yet there was an amount of sacredness attached to them which is incompatible with the performance of everyday duties. If this reasoning is correct, it follows that that Friday—which, as we learn, was so largely occupied with business—could not have been a feast Sabbath, which it must have been if the Passover had been observed the evening before. There is no denying that the Jews had very strict notions about their feast Sabbaths ; and so much was this the case, that one of their great teachers taught that “if a hen laid an egg on one of them, it was wrong to eat it.” The only way out of the difficulty, therefore, is by supposing that this Friday was a common day, and that the next day was at once the Sabbath and the first day of the Passover feast. The tradition of early Christian times bears us out in believing that John’s version is literally correct, and that the Last Supper was different from the Passover. The Jewish tradition, too, which was under no bias to mislead, affirms that the death of Christ took place on the 14th Nisan, or the evening before the Passover. The incidental notices in the other narratives confirm rather

than contradict our conclusion. They show us that after Judas left the room, Jesus and His disciples immediately followed him—an action which was contrary to the strict spirit of the Levitical law. They teach us that Judas hired a band and went by night to arrest Jesus—a step which he would hardly have taken had the night been one of peculiar solemnity. They tell us that the Sanhedrim resolved, on account of the danger of the measure, to take no steps to kill Jesus on the feast day; and yet, if the Last Supper was the paschal meal, that was the very thing which they did. But if, on the other hand, the Last Supper was not the paschal meal, we can see a reason for expedition in bringing about the arrest and the crucifixion. Then in what is said of the feast itself there is only mention of bread and wine; and the general incidents of the Supper bear but a slight resemblance to those numerous ceremonies that accompanied the observance of the Passover. The washing of the disciples' feet, and the leisurely manner in which they partook of the evening meal, are wholly inconsistent with the usual paschal observances.

In fine, it seems to us, from a careful examination of the passages in the Gospel narratives, and after giving every weight to those arguments by which it is maintained that there is a discrepancy between the Synoptists and John about the date of the Last Supper and the day of Christ's death, that the day on which Jesus

partook of His Last Supper was the evening of Thursday, Nisan 13 ; that the Supper was not the annual paschal meal, which could not be legally eaten till the following evening ; that there is nothing in the language of the Synoptists, or in any of the circumstances they detail, which requires us to believe that their account is inconsistent or irreconcilable with John's ; and that so far from being contradictory of John's version, there are hints and expressions in them which, in our opinion, admit of an interpretation not inconsistent with the Johannine account.

It is now necessary to refer to what is known in history as "the Paschal Controversy," as it was out of it seemingly that there originated the question that we have just been discussing. There is a large amount of literature in connection with this controversy, yet, after all, it is beset with considerable difficulty. It appears that in the end of the second century there existed in the Church a difference of opinion as to a certain feast which was observed about the time of the Jewish Passover. In the Western Churches it was kept on a certain day of the week ; in the Eastern, on a certain day of the month. In the former it was kept on a Friday, that Friday being either the 14th Nisan or the first Friday after that date ; in the latter it was kept on the 14th of Nisan, on whatever day of the week it happened to fall.

There were three important controversies in connec-

tion with this question. The first, which took place in 162 A.D., arose when Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, was in Rome, and when in conversation he argued the subject with Anicetus, bishop of Rome. It appears that in this disputation neither party was convinced by the other. They parted, however, as they had met, with feelings of mutual respect and affection. In reference to this discussion Eusebius says: "For neither could Anicetus persuade Polycarp not to observe it [the fourteenth day of the Passover], because he had always observed it with John, the disciple of our Lord, and the rest of the apostles with whom he associated; and neither did Polycarp persuade Anicetus to observe, who said that he was bound to maintain the practice of the presbyters before him. Which things being so, they communed with each other; and in the Church, Anicetus yielded to Polycarp—out of respect, no doubt, to the office of consecrating; and they separated from each other in peace, all the Church being at peace, both those who observed, and those who did not observe, maintaining peace."¹

The second, which took place in 168 A.D., was carried on between Apollinaris, who was bishop of Hierapolis in Phrygia, and Melito, bishop of Sardis. Melito wrote a book on the Passover, and in that work he advocated

¹ Euseb., H. E. v. 24.—Οὕτε γὰρ ὁ Ἀνίκητος τὸν Πολύκαρπον πείσαι ἐδύνατο μὴ τηρεῖν, ἅτε μετὰ Ἰωάννου τοῦ μαθητοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν, καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀποστόλων οἷς συνδιέτριφέν, κ.τ.λ.

the opinion which was held by the Church of Asia Minor generally. Apollinaris, on the other hand, defended the Western practice, and wrote: "There are some who say that the Lord ate the sheep with His disciples on the 14th, and that He Himself suffered on the great day of unleavened bread; and they relate that Matthew says exactly as they have understood the matter to be; whence their understanding of it does not harmonise with the Law; and the Gospels, according to them, seem to differ."¹

The third, which seems to have aroused the keenest discussion, took place in 190 A.D., when Victor, bishop of Rome, argued the matter with Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, and ordered the bishops of Proconsular Asia to adopt the Western practice; and then, when they refused compliance with his haughty order, cut them off from fellowship with the Church. There were certain Eastern bishops, however, who were in favour of the Western practice, and willingly conformed to it. It may be mentioned that Irenæus disapproved of the conduct of Victor in this matter.

The feast which originated all this controversy was held in Asia on the 14th Nisan, at the hour in which the Jews celebrated their Passover, and hence the Christians

¹ Chron. Pasch., ed. Dindoff, i. 14.—Εἰσι τοίνυν οἱ . . . λέγουσιν, ὅτι τῇ 14' τὸ πρόβατον μετὰ τῶν μαθητῶν ἔφαγεν ὁ Κύριος τῇ δε μεγάλῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν ἀζύμων αὐτοὺς ἔπαθεν καὶ διηγούνται Ματθαῖον οὕτω λέγειν ὡς νενοήκασιν· ὅθεν ἀσομφωνός τε νομῶ ἢ νόησις αὐτῶν καὶ στασιάζειν δοκεῖ κατ' αὐτοὺς τὰ εὐαγγέλια.

in Asia Minor who followed this practice were called Quartodecimani or Fourteenth-day Men. Now, in observing the feast on the 14th Nisan, they argued that they were following the example of the Apostle John, and maintained that, during his residence in Ephesus, John had always observed the 14th Nisan. Polycarp, in his argument with Anicetus, defends his observance of the feast on the 14th Nisan by declaring that he had often celebrated it on that day with John and the other disciples, whom he knew. Polycrates also, in his contention with Victor, refers to the same example in support of the Eastern practice. In a letter which he addressed to Victor, fragments of which have been preserved by Eusebius, he writes: "We therefore observe the genuine day, neither adding thereto nor taking therefrom. For in Asia great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again in the day of the Lord's appearing, in which He will come with glory from heaven, and will raise up all the saints; Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters. His other daughter also, who, having lived under the influence of the Holy Ghost, now likewise rests in Ephesus. Moreover, John, who rested upon the bosom of our Lord, who also was a priest, and bore the sacerdotal plate, both a martyr and teacher. He is buried in Ephesus; also Polycarp of Smyrna, both bishop and martyr. Thraseus also, bishop and martyr of Eumenia, who is buried at

Smyrna. Why should I mention Sagaris, bishop and martyr, who rests at Laodicea? Moreover, the blessed Papirius, and Melito the eunuch, &c. . . . All these observed the 14th day of the Passover, according to the Gospel, deviating in no respect, but following the rule of faith. Moreover, I Polycrates, who am the least of all of you, according to the tradition of my relatives, some of whom I have followed. For there were seven of my relatives bishops, and I am the eighth; and my relatives always observed the day when the people [the Jews] threw away the leaven. I therefore, brethren, am now sixty-five years in the Lord, who having conferred with the brethren throughout the world, and having studied the whole of the sacred Scriptures, am not at all alarmed at those things with which I am threatened to be intimidated. For they who are greater than I have said, 'We ought to obey God rather than men.'"¹

In commenting on these passages Dr Robinson writes: "But under the Roman bishop Victor the controversy broke out anew in 190 A.D., between the Romish Church on the one side, with which the Churches of Alexandria, Tyre, Cesarea, and Jerusalem took part—and the Churches of Asia Minor on the other side, of which Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, was now the leader.

¹ Euseb., H. E. v. 24.—*Ἡμεῖς οὖν ἀραδιούργητον ἀγομεν τὴν ἡμέραν, μήτε προστιθέντες, μήτε ἀφαιρούμενοι. Καὶ γὰρ κατὰ τὴν Ἀσίαν μεγάλα στοίχαια κεκοίμηται ἅτινα ἀναστήσεται τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κυρίου; ἐν ᾗ ἔρχεται μετὰ δόξης, κ.τ.λ.*

Among several other points in the controversy, the main inquiry now was, Whether the yearly Passover was to be retained, and the Jewish law followed in respect to the time? The opponents, or at least Apollinaris, Clement of Alexandria, and Hippolytus, according to the fragments preserved in the 'Chronicon Paschale,' affirmed that 'the last meal of Jesus with His disciples was not the Passover, since, according to John's Gospel, Christ partook of it on the thirteenth of Nisan; while on the following day, which was the appointed time for the Jewish Passover, He offered up Himself as the true sacrifice for mankind, of which the Passover was the type.' The title or argument of the tract of Apollinaris was—Ὅτι ἐν ᾧ καιρῷ ὁ κύριος ἔπαθεν, οὐκ ἔφαγεν τὸ τύπικον πάσχα. On the other side, Polycrates wrote an epistle to Victor, preserved by Eusebius, in which he asserts that the Asiatics celebrated the true and genuine day, and appeals to the testimony and practice of apostles and others,—viz., the Apostle Philip, who died at Hierapolis; the Apostle John, who taught in Asia Minor, and died at Ephesus; the martyr Polycarp, and other bishops and teachers, of whom he says, 'These all kept the day of the Passover on the fourteenth, according to the Gospel; deviating in nothing, but following according to the rule of faith.' Of his own seven relatives, who also had been bishops, Polycrates says: 'And these my relatives always celebrated the day when the [Jewish] people put away the

leaven.' The result of the controversy at this time was, that Victor attempted to break off communion with the Asiatic Churches. For this step he was strongly censured by Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, in a letter preserved by Eusebius; and other bishops likewise raised their voices against the rash measure. Through their efforts peace was at length restored, and both parties remained undisturbed in their own modes of observance until the great Council of Nicea in 325 A.D., where this question was finally decided in favour of the West. The few scattered Churches which afterwards continued to keep the Passover according to the Jewish time were accounted heretics, and are known in history as Quatuordecimani, or 'Fourteenth-day Men.'"¹

Now Baur and his followers argue, from what Polycrates says about John's example, against the genuineness of John's Gospel. Davidson adopts this view, and tells us that the Christians of Asia Minor who kept the paschal feast on 14th Nisan—the same day on which Christ ate the lamb according to the Synoptic Gospels—appealed in support of their practice to apostolic tradition and the example of John himself. He argues that the fourth Gospel is opposed to their view, as it puts the crucifixion of Jesus on the 14th, so that His last meal with His disciples must have been on the 13th. In their arguments, they take it for

¹ Discrepancy between John, &c., Brit. and For. Rev. ii. 377, 378.

granted that what John celebrated was the institution of the Last Supper, and on this supposition they maintain that if the practice which was observed in Asia Minor originated with the Apostle John, and was sanctioned by him, he could not have written the fourth Gospel, which teaches that Jesus kept His Last Supper not on the 14th but on the 13th Nisan, and was crucified on the 14th. But the Christians of Asia Minor celebrated the 14th Nisan not as the day on which Christ ate the Passover with His disciples, but as the day on which He was crucified, and by His crucifixion became the real and true Paschal Lamb, of which the Mosaic paschal lamb was the type. On this day—the 14th Nisan—the Passover was celebrated in Asia Minor, because on that day the true Paschal Lamb—Christ—was slain; and as John had observed this feast, which was commemorative of Christ's crucifixion, it follows that his example is thoroughly consistent with his Gospel. The argument, therefore, that is drawn from the prevailing Quatuordeciman practice of the Asiatics—in favour of which they appealed to the traditional authority of John—in order to prove that the fourth Gospel cannot have been written by John, utterly falls to the ground.

Upon a review of the different statements which we have been able to examine upon the subject, it seems to us that too much has been made of this Asiatic practice. It is not very fully made out what was the

origin or occasion of that practice; but whatever gave rise to it, it does not seem in any way to militate against the apostolic authorship of our Gospel. As far as we can learn, the argument against the genuineness of the Gospel which was drawn from the observance of this feast in Asia Minor is gradually being abandoned, and it is most likely that ere long it will be finally given up as an untenable and an unreliable point in the controversy. In dealing with this question, Sanday sums up his views in these words, with which we conclude this section: "The history of the Paschal controversy is, however, too obscure for any positive conclusion to be built upon it; and there is the less reason for attempting to make it carry more than it will bear, that it can in no case affect the argument for the genuineness of the Gospel. For the external evidence shows that the Gospel was received in Asia Minor, and received there at the very time when the controversy was raging."¹

¹ Author. and Histor. Character of the Fourth Gospel, p. 211.

V.

MEDIATE AUTHORSHIP.

THE hypothesis that the fourth Gospel is partly John's and partly another's has been freely discussed, and has found some acceptance. It is alleged that the matter of the Gospel is Johannine, but that the composition is the work of another—probably of one who was an intimate acquaintance of the apostle. It seems to us, however, that there is nothing to justify this supposition, or to suggest any separate or secondary agency in its production. If our arguments from internal and external testimony make anything clear, it is that the fourth Gospel is the single-handed work of the Apostle John. It may be, as Ewald thinks, that in the composition of his Gospel John was assisted by one or more, who acted as his amanuenses, and that he was relieved of the mere manual and mechanical performance by some kindly and confidential hand. But beyond this there is no reason to think that the Gospel is anything but simply and entirely John's, or that either in its contents or its composition is there anything to suggest a

different authorship. The whole framework of it is the production of one mind, and the spirit that breathes in every part of it is none else than the spirit of him who was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who was therefore most likely to know, and best fitted to record, those sublime sayings of Jesus, who, by the confession of his enemies, "spake as never man spake." It will not remove our objection to this hypothesis to tell us, as Weizsäcker has done, that "all the grounds which speak for the apostolic origin of the Gospel remain untouched, when it is assumed that the Johannian tradition was strictly followed in its composition."¹ This view of the matter seems to us to be utterly untenable. The evidence which the facts of the Gospel reveal—that they were seen by him who records them—is such that there is no room or reason to warrant the idea of mediate authorship. They were either put into their present shape by John himself, or the whole Gospel is nothing but a fabrication. The work abounds with passages which no second person would have been able to remember or would have cared to record. They are so minute, and in many instances so isolated, that they could have made no impression on any but on one who knew them by personal observation. The following are some of those passages, and are sufficient to illustrate what we mean: "They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day" (i. 39). "After this He went down to Capernaum,

¹ Quoted in Sanday's *Fourth Gospel*, p. 298.

He, and His mother, and His brethren, and His disciples; and they continued there not many days" (ii. 12). "Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias" (vi. 23). These are a few of the passages which, as we think, no one but an eyewitness could have remembered, or would have thought it worth his while to record. The more we look into the fourth Gospel in all its aspects, the more are we convinced that there is no ground for alleging that, either in its thought or in its style, it is to be ascribed to any but to him who is known as the beloved disciple. There is one hand in it, as there is one mind in it, from the beginning to the end. Be it the matter or the manner of the book, the contents or the composition, there is an individuality in it, a unity, an identity, which is wholly inconsistent with the hypothesis of mediate authorship. The hypothesis we are dealing with has been adopted by Mr Arnold in his 'God and the Bible,' and advocated with much ingenuity, though we confess we have not been able to appreciate his arguments or accept his conclusions. He seeks to get quit of certain difficulties by means of this mediate or double authorship, and holds that the sayings, or, as he calls them, the *logia*, are John's, but that the setting or placing of them is by a subsequent hand. It will be necessary to quote his own words, that we may give a fair representation of his views. He says, "In his old age, St John at Ephesus has *logia*—'sayings of the Lord'—and has incidents

in the Lord's story which have not been published in any of the written accounts that were beginning at that time to be handed about. The elders of Ephesus—whom tradition afterwards makes into apostles, fellows with St John—move him to bestow his treasure on the world. He gives his materials, and the presbytery of Ephesus provides a redaction for them, and publishes them. The redaction, with its unity of tone, its flowingness and connectedness, is by one single hand—the hand of a man of literary talent, a Greek Christian, whom the Church of Ephesus found proper for such a task. A man of literary talent, a man of soul, also a theologian. . . . The Gospel is John's, because its whole value is in the *logia*, the sayings of the Lord, which it saves, and by John these *logia* were furnished. But the redaction was not John's, and could not be; and at the beginning of the second century, when the work appeared, many there would be who knew well that John's the redaction was not."¹ Then, again, in reply to the assertion of certain critics that the internal evidence leads to the conclusion that the Gospel is a fancy piece by a Gnostically-disposed Greek Christian—a consummate literary artist, seeking to develop the Logos idea, to cry up Greek Christianity and to decry Jewish—Mr Arnold says: "Much more it seems to us to point to a sincere Christian, a man of literary talent certainly, and a Greek, but not a consummate artist ;

¹ God and the Bible, pp. 256-8.

having traditions from John; having, above all, *logia* from John, sayings of the Lord, and combining and presenting his materials in the way natural to him. The evangelist's literary procedure is that of a Greek of ability well versed in the philosophical speculation of his time, and having the resources of Greek style and composition at his command."¹ Though we might have given other pertinent quotations from Mr Arnold, we think that these are sufficient to indicate the views he holds in reference to the authorship of the fourth Gospel. He asserts, and finds, as he maintains, proofs of his assertion in the Gospel, that the groundwork is by the hand of John, but that the superstructure is by the hand of another—that the materials were supplied by the apostle, but that the grouping of them was by some intimate friend. Now it seems to us that this theory is beset with insurmountable difficulties. It lands us in great perplexity, and we will be unable to say or to decide where the apostle's pen stops and the composer's begins. The Gospel is from first to last so complete and uniform in its method and system, that there is no break or flaw to indicate what paragraphs are by the one and what by the other. No one can study it with care and yet fail to be impressed with the Johannine character that pervades it,—without seeing that the thought of it and the style of it are by one and the same person. The theory, therefore, does not

¹ God and the Bible, p. 284.

commend itself to us in any way, and will not bear to be tested by the rules of ordinary criticism. Mr Arnold admits as much, and acknowledges, that "to determine what is John's and what is not, is not only a delicate question, but one which we must sometimes be content to leave undetermined."¹ This is all he can say in defence of his theory, and in saying this he leaves us in a difficulty as great as that from which he seeks by his hypothesis to free us. To confirm his hypothesis, he selects several sayings from the Gospel, and affirms that these demonstrate the verity of his position. It will be important, then, to refer to these passages, and to show the value of his evidence. It will be enough to notice only a few of his illustrations, but these will enable us to examine into the worth and sufficiency of the grounds on which he seeks to base his theory. The first instance we shall give is taken from the narrative in chapter iv. in connection with the woman of Samaria. In the sixth verse, it is said that "Jesus, wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well;" and in the use of the word "thus," Mr Arnold finds evidence of the handiwork of one to whom John had intrusted his traditional sayings or *logia*. He tells us that the expression is incongruous, and that the writer had probably John's words in his mind, and that the words of John must have been these: "Jesus, tired with His journey, sat, *as I have been telling you*, by the

¹ God and the Bible, p. 261.

well." But surely this is a very far-fetched explanation, and has nothing in it to commend itself. The simple and obvious meaning of the word is, that He sat *as He was—without any ado, or without any scruple or ceremony.* That is the meaning of the word, and there is nothing in the use of it which suggests the composition of any other than the apostle. The inference of Mr Arnold, however ingenious, cannot be accepted, and must be dismissed as insufficient and unsatisfactory. The next instance is from the same narrative, and is found in the 43d and 44th verses of the chapter. There it is said that "After two days He departed thence into Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet hath no honour in his own country." Here, again, Mr Arnold finds proof of another hand than John's, and concludes that the writer inserts these words in the wrong place. Now it is not to be denied that the words of the apostle require explanation, and seem to mean the opposite of what they say. The reason they assign for Christ's going to Galilee should have led him rather to avoid it. But whatever the explanation is, it is not necessary to suppose that John had committed his sayings to a friend, who, in writing his narrative, had inadvertently misplaced them. There have been several explanations given of the words, of which the following is a summary: It has been said that the word translated country is used here in a limited sense, and means Nazareth, and that the expression signifies that

He went to Galilee, but not to Nazareth, where He had been brought up, and in reference to which similar words had been previously used. But we do not accept of this as a satisfactory explanation, and for this among other reasons, that the word in the original does not mean the native town, but the *native country*; and from what follows, this is undoubtedly its meaning here. Then, again, it has been said that the word is applied to Judea, the home of the prophets, and therefore of the Messiah also, who was born in Bethlehem. This was the explanation of Origen in ancient times, and Baur in modern times has adopted it; but there are no good grounds to support it. Judea is not once mentioned in this chapter, and consequently this explanation must be abandoned. It has also been said by some that Jesus went to Galilee because of the conflict He was to encounter there; and by others, that He went in the hope of obtaining rest and seclusion. The former is the opinion of Brücker, and the latter of Luthardt and Ebrard. But in what is subsequently said of Christ's Galilean ministry, there is no reference whatever either to His conflict or His repose, and therefore these opinions do not meet the case, and must be rejected. Then, finally, the solution of Meyer, which we think the happiest, and the one which most commends itself, is as follows: "The words give the *reason* why He did not hesitate to return to Galilee. The gist of the reason lies in the antithetical reference

of ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι. If, as Jesus Himself testified, a prophet had no honour *in his own country*, he must seek it *abroad*. 'And this Jesus had done. Abroad,' in Jerusalem, He had by His mighty works inspired the Galileans who were there with that respect which they were accustomed to deny to a prophet at home. Thus He brought the prophet's honour with Him *from abroad*. Accordingly (verse 45), He found a reception among the Galileans also, because they had seen His miracles *in Jerusalem* (ii. 23)."¹ The last instance we shall produce is from the words which occur at the end of the fourteenth chapter: "Arise, let us go hence." Mr Arnold says: "Beyond all manner of doubt Jesus never said in one connection, 'As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence. I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.' And so on, without the least sign of rising or going away, but with the discourse continuing throughout three more chapters. How the evangelist could have come to make Him say it is the question. . . . They were traditional words of Jesus, as we see from the 'Rise, let us be going' of St Matthew; and the composer of the fourth Gospel may have thought they would come in serviceably at this point. What he thought we can only conjecture."² Now, with all deference, it seems to us that this interpretation is unnecessary and untenable, and the evidence Mr Arnold

¹ Com. on St John, i. 226.

² God and the Bible, pp. 289, 290.

adduces in support of his theory from this and other passages is far-fetched and unsatisfactory. The words in the verse we have quoted are few and simple, and their introduction in the place they occupy is easily explained. It must be remembered that Jesus and His disciples had just finished the Last Supper, and it was probably after the hymn which was sung that He used these words. It was certainly in the middle of His discourse ; and it appears to us that at the time He used them He rose from the table, as if to leave the room. But for some reason or other He resumed His discourse in the supper-room, and delivered chaps. xv. and xvi., and also offered up the prayer in chap. xvii., while the disciples, who had also risen from the table, were still standing around Him. This is the explanation which we think satisfactorily disposes of the difficulty. There are some, indeed, who suppose that the discourse in chaps. xv. and xvi. was delivered after they had left the supper-room, and while on their way to Gethsemane ; but this view, to say the least, is a very unlikely one. It is quite true that Christ was wont to converse with His disciples as He journeyed with them, but it is not probable that He would deliver such a long discourse either on the streets or by the road, and journeying as He was, not only at night, but to the scene of His betrayal. On the whole, we contend that these words could only have been introduced by a writer who was both an eye and an ear wit-

ness, and that there is nothing in them out of keeping with the general character of the book, or to justify the supposition of a mediate authorship. There are no words which better express our views than those of Sanday, and with his words we conclude this section: "I can as little think of the author of the fourth Gospel as a forger, or even disciple laboriously building upon other men's foundations, as see in him a passive organ of infallibility. Both views equally fail to explain the facts, and by the facts in this, as in all cases, we must judge, certain that in the end the interests of truth must accord with them. In this case they seem to give a clear verdict. The Gospel is the work of the apostle, the son of Zebédée; it is the record of an eye-witness of the life of our Lord Jesus Christ; and its historical character is such as under the circumstances might be expected—it needs no adventitious commendation to make it higher."¹

¹ Fourth Gospel, pp. 303-4.

VI.

TIME AND PLACE OF COMPOSITION.

THERE is every reason to believe, and it is the general tradition, that John's Gospel was the last written of the four Gospels, and was written considerably later than the other three. According to the testimony of Irenæus, the date of its composition was subsequent to the death of Peter and Paul. Epiphanius states that it was written when John was ninety years of age, and there seems to be no doubt that it was written after he left Judea. But though those who have examined our Gospel are generally agreed as to the comparative lateness of its composition, they differ as to whether it was composed before or after the destruction of Jerusalem. The former view is maintained by Lardner, Michaelis, and others. Their opinion is founded on these words in chap. v. 2: "Now there *is* at Jerusalem, by the sheep-market, a pool, . . . having five porches."¹ The word "*is*"

¹ John, v. 2.—'Ἔστι δὲ ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολύμοις, ἐπὶ τῇ προβατικῇ κολυμβήθρᾳ, . . . πέντε στοὰς ἔχουσα.

(ἔσται), which occurs in the verse, seems to imply, and is held to indicate, that the pool of Bethesda was still in existence. If the pool had been destroyed—which it is taken for granted it would have been if the destruction of Jerusalem had taken place—it is argued that the apostle would have used the imperfect “was” (ἦν), and not the present “is” (ἔσται). It appears to us, however, that the inference is not a necessary one, nor one that can be indisputably relied on. It is quite conceivable that in the general ruin, buildings of public convenience or importance might be allowed to escape; and in point of fact, it rarely happens that there is an unlimited and universal destruction. It is most unlikely, besides, that Titus, who was so anxious to save the Temple, would insist on the demolition of all else; and it is probable that he would preserve those porticos which would be so convenient for baths, and which might be serviceable to any garrison that might be stationed there. It by no means follows, therefore, that Jerusalem was still standing when the fourth Gospel was written, even though John speaks of the Pool of Bethesda as still in existence. Moreover, it is stated by Eusebius and Jerome, in their *Chorographia* of Judea, that the pool was well known in their day. Besides, Dean Alford in a note informs us, on the testimony of a friend who had visited its supposed site, that the remains of four pillars are still visible in what is believed to have been the Pool of Bethesda. From

all this it appears that we are not justified in arguing that John's Gospel appeared before the destruction of Jerusalem, on the ground that he uses in this verse the present tense "is," and not the past "was."

It is not to be forgotten, and ought to be mentioned here, that there are other passages in John's Gospel which have a very different significance, and which indicate that, at the time he wrote, Jerusalem and its environs had been greatly altered, if not altogether laid waste. For instance, in chap. xviii. 1, it is said, "He went forth with His disciples over the brook Kedron, where *was* a garden;"¹ then again, in xix. 41 it is said, "Now in the place where He was crucified there *was* a garden;" and more particularly in xi. 18, where it is said, "Now Bethany *was* nigh unto Jerusalem."² On a consideration of these passages, and in the light of what we have said with reference to chap. v. 2, one can hardly resist the inference that the city had suffered through the Roman invasion, and had been visited with the prophetic ploughshare, when the fourth Gospel made its appearance.

It seems to us, therefore, sufficiently proved, or at the least highly probable, that the date of our Gospel's composition was posterior, by a considerable interval, to the overthrow of the Jewish capital, and may be assigned to the closing years of the first century.

¹ John, xviii. 1.—Ὅπου ἦν κήπος. Cf. xix. 41.

² John, xi. 18.—Ἦν δὲ ἡ Βηθανία ἐγγὺς τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων.

The words of Meyer may be fitly inserted here: "As John certainly did not settle in Ephesus until after St Paul's removal from his Asiatic sphere of labour, nor indeed doubtless until after the destruction of Jerusalem, where, until then, John resided; as, further, the distance from Palestinian circumstances, so evident in the Gospel, implies an already prolonged residence away from Palestine; as the elaborate view of the Logos is a post-Pauline phase of the apprehension and exposition of Christ's higher nature, and suggests a longer familiarity with philosophical influences; as the entire character and nature of the book, its clearness and depth, its calmness and completeness, most probably indicate the matured culture and clarifying influence of riper years, without, however, in the least degree suggesting to us the weakness of old age,—we must put the composition not before the destruction of Jerusalem (Lampe, Wegscheider), but a considerable time after; for if that catastrophe had been still fresh in the recollection of the writer, in the depths of its first impression, it could hardly, on psychological grounds, have escaped express mention in the book."¹

As to the place of its composition, it is generally assigned to Ephesus, and Irenæus tells us it was written there.² It is also said that the original MS. was preserved in Ephesus for many years, and that it was held in the greatest veneration by the Ephesian

¹ Com. on St John, i. 54.

² Adv. Hæc., iii. 1.

Church.¹ There is evidence in the Gospel itself that it was not written in Judea or for Jews. If it had been meant for Jewish readers, exclusively or chiefly, the writer would scarcely have explained Jewish customs as he has done (i. 39-42; ii. 6-13; iv. 9; v. 1, 2.) As we have already pointed out, there is every reason to believe that John passed the closing years of his life in Asia Minor, and it is highly probable, therefore, that his Gospel was written, as Irenæus asserts, at Ephesus, the place of his final residence. There is another opinion as to the place of the Gospel's composition, which it may be proper to mention. The opinion we refer to was that of Theophylact in ancient times, and is held by Hug in modern times, and is to the effect that the Gospel was written not at Ephesus, but in Patmos. But there is nothing to support this view, or even to make it probable. There is a middle and a modified position also as to the place of its composition. It has been suggested that John dictated the Gospel in Patmos, and afterwards, through the co-operation of Gaius, published it at Ephesus. There is, however, no good ground for this conjecture, or for departing from the tradition which has come down to us from the time of Irenæus, that John's Gospel was composed by the apostle during his residence at Ephesus.

¹ Chron. Pasch.

VII.

DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL.

THERE has been no small discussion, and no small difference of opinion, as to the purpose or design of the apostle in the preparation of his Gospel. It seems to us, however, that in these discussions it has been too much overlooked, that in a work of such comprehension and compass there may, and almost must be, incidental and not unfrequent allusions, not to a single but to several subjects. The writer may, from the beginning to the end of his composition, be continually conscious of the main purpose of his work, but at the same time there may be repeated references to other and subordinate purposes. If this had been borne in mind, it might have prevented not a little of that controversial literature which exists on the subject. The best way to arrive at a correct conclusion on the point will manifestly be by an appeal to the Gospel itself. There we learn that the writer's design in his Gospel was to confirm Christians in their faith, and to encourage them in that spiritual life in Christ here, whose

certain issue is eternal life hereafter. His own words are: "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name," chap. xx. 31. These words are plain enough, and they evidently imply that his chief aim was to present Christ in His fulness for our belief and acceptance, and to form and nourish that faith within us which has Him for its portion, and through Him salvation for its inheritance. It is important to remember that the object of the other evangelists was precisely the same, and that their object also was to represent Christ as the light and the life of men. They sought no less than John did to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God; and that faith, in Him, in His person and doctrine, is God's plan for the regeneration and redemption of man. John's main design, then, was to place Christ before us in His personal excellence and official sufficiency as the Sent of God, and to win us over to a whole and hearty reliance on His merits for reconciliation with heaven here, and admission to glory hereafter. But while there is no doubt that the chief object John had in view was to establish and extend the faith that rests and rejoices in Christ, it has been contended that this one object does not sufficiently exhaust the purpose or explain the peculiarity of his Gospel. It is maintained that the apostle had other aims and purposes in view, and that these mainly influenced him in the composi-

tion of his work. We shall now enumerate some of these purposes, and shall endeavour to examine them with all candour and care. It has been, and still is, held by some, that John's design was chiefly supplemental, and by others that it was chiefly polemical. These seem to be the leading opinions on the question, and we shall examine them in their order, and deal with them as completely, yet as concisely, as possible.

1. THE SUPPLEMENTAL HYPOTHESIS.

It was an early belief, and it is still the belief of many, that John's chief design in the preparation and publication of his Gospel was to supplement the Synoptic Gospels. This opinion was held by Clement of Alexandria, by Eusebius, by Theodore of Mopseustia, and by Jerome, in ancient times; and in modern times it is held with some modification by Storr, Hug, and others. It will be enough to quote here the words of Eusebius. He informs us that, "After Mark and Luke had already published their Gospels, they say that John, who during all this time was proclaiming the Gospel without writing, at length proceeded to write it, for the following reasons: The three Gospels previously written having been distributed among all, and also handed to him, they say that he admitted them, giving his testimony to their truth, but that there was only wanting in the narratives the account of the things done by Christ

among the first of His deeds and at the commencement of the Gospel. And this was the truth. . . . For these reasons, the Apostle John, it is said, being entreated to undertake it, wrote the account of the time not recorded by the former evangelists, and the deeds done by our Saviour which they have passed by (for these were the events that occurred before the imprisonment of the Baptist); and the very fact is intimated by him when he says, 'This beginning of miracles Jesus made,' and then proceeds to make mention of the Baptist in the midst of our Lord's deeds, as John was at that time 'baptising in Ænon near Salim.' He plainly also shows this in the words, 'John was not yet cast into prison.' The apostle therefore in his Gospel gives the deeds of Jesus before the Baptist was cast into prison, but the other three evangelists mention the circumstances after that event. One who attends to these circumstances can no longer entertain the opinion that the Gospels are at variance with each other, as the Gospel of John comprehends the first events of Christ, but the others the history that took place at the latter part of the time."¹ The words of Theodore of Mopseustia are in the same strain, as are also those of Jerome, who was the means of establishing the tradition in the West.

¹ H. E. iii. 24.—"Ἡ δὲ Μάρκου καὶ Λουκᾶ τῶν κατ' αὐτοὺς εὐαγγελίων τὴν ἐκδοσιν πεποιημένων, Ἰωάννου φασὶ τὸν πάντα χρόνον ἀγράφῳ κεχρημένον κηρύγματι, τέλος καὶ ἐπὶ τὴν γραφὴν ἐλθεῖν τοιαύτῃ χάριν αἰτίας, κ. τ. λ.

It is to be observed that according to this hypothesis the apostle had the other Gospels before him when he wrote, and that he wrote purposely with the view of supplementing these. Hug and others, in modern times, as we have said, have adopted the same theory, and have argued that John not only knew the Synoptic Gospels, but worked up such material as the earlier evangelists left unused or untouched. In reply, it is to be observed that there is no evidence that John had the Synoptic Gospels before him when he wrote, or that those to whom he wrote were acquainted with the contents of these Gospels. Though it is evident that John has related discourses and miracles which were passed over by the earlier writers, yet there is strong evidence that John's purpose was not to fill up gaps left in Christ's history by the Synoptic Gospels. If this had been the case—if his design had been to supply what they had omitted—it is fair to argue that he would have been careful to omit what they had recorded. But this is very far from being the case; and if we compare the accounts which are left us of the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ, we will find that they are as fully related in John as in the other three Gospels. The same thing may be said of the feeding of the five thousand, and the walking on the sea. These miracles are recorded equally by him and by them; but if his design had been simply to write a supplemental Gospel, there would have been no necessity for, and no likeli-

hood of, his repeating what the other evangelists had already recorded. Then it may be urged, if John's Gospel had been meant to fill in what had been left out by the Synoptics in Christ's history, it is almost certain that he would have thrown out some hint to this effect. There was an opening for this and an opportunity at the 31st verse of chapter xx., where he could scarcely avoid stating this to be his design, if it had been so. But from the commencement to the close of his Gospel there is not the slightest intimation either that he had been acquainted with the three other Gospels, or that his purpose was to complete and perfect them. The more we look into the fourth Gospel, the more are we convinced that there is no trace of its alleged supplementary character. It furnishes every evidence that it is an original work, complete in itself, and that it was written with no special, far less exclusive, relation to the others. It is no doubt true, as we have hinted, that in John's narrative there are things recorded which are not found in the Synoptics, and that in some cases there is a fuller record in John than in them ; but there is nothing in this to justify the assertion, that his object in writing was to complete what they had left unfinished. So far from this being the case, there is occasionally rather a disagreement with than a supplementing of the Synoptic narratives ; and this will appear if we consider the seeming diversity that exists between John's account and theirs in reference to the scene and

duration of Christ's ministry. The conclusion, therefore, which is forced upon us from a consideration of the whole circumstances of the case, is, that the supplemental hypothesis is erroneous, and that it has no foundation in fact, notwithstanding of the traditionary testimony which is adduced in its behalf.

We cannot perhaps close this argument in more appropriate language than in the following quotation from Macdonald's 'Life and Writings of St John: ' "This Gospel is by no means to be regarded as designed merely to supply what had been omitted by the Synoptists. It has a distinct and easily defined object. It has a precision of method and progressive development of ideas suited to this object. This may be easily traced in the parables and miracles which the writer admits, as well as in those he omits. . . . The reason why the particular miracles found in the fourth Gospel were recorded by its writer, or the principle of selection in regard to them by which he was guided, is to be found in the special purpose which, directed by the Spirit of inspiration, he had in view in writing it. This he clearly states was to set forth the 'signs' or proof that Jesus was the promised Saviour of the world, that 'believing,' men might have 'life through His name.' . . . 'All who have examined this Gospel with care have noticed a marked peculiarity in the order and arrangement of the narrative, and in the principles of selection which apparently determined the author in

his choice of what should be inserted. The explanation of this peculiarity is doubtless to be found primarily and mainly in the fact that he was writing a life of Jesus, not for its own sake, but for the purpose of proving thereby that He was the Christ, the Son of God. This being his aim, he shapes all things to the end which he has in view.' This specific and distinctly announced design is never for a moment lost sight of. He had the world especially outside of Judea, for which he was then labouring and writing, constantly in his thoughts."¹

2. THE POLEMICAL HYPOTHESIS.

The idea that the fourth Gospel was written with a polemical design has been a long-cherished one, and there is scarcely an early heresy which, according to this idea, it was not purposely written to refute. The heresies in early Christian times were very numerous, and it will be found that critics have fixed upon one or other of these as the special object of the Gospel's refutation. In these circumstances it will not be possible to do more than refer to a few of these opinions, and to examine what amount of probability is due to each. One opinion is—an opinion which was held by Irenæus, Epiphanius, Jerome, and others—that John wrote his Gospel in express opposition to the heresy

¹ Life and Writings of St John, pp. 270-2.

of Cerinthus; but of this there is not the slightest evidence in the Gospel itself. The peculiar notions of Cerinthus, so far as we are able to discover and define them, were these: That the world was made not by the supreme God, but by an inferior being; that Jesus was the son naturally begotten of Joseph and Mary; that at His baptism the supreme Logos or Spirit of God descended upon Him for the first time, and abode with Him till His sufferings began, when it separated from Him and reascended to the Father; and that the union of the human and the divine in His person was only temporary—not permanent. These are something like the views which have been attributed to Cerinthus; and it has been held that John's Gospel was written expressly to oppose these views. There can be no doubt, indeed, that the teaching of the Gospel is the very opposite of what is ascribed to Cerinthus, and that it sets forth the essential and the eternal union of the divine and the human nature in the Messiah's person. But we are not prepared to admit, nor do we find sufficient evidence, that in John's Gospel there is an express refutation of the views of Cerinthus. It is true that there are passages here and there which are directly antagonistic to the teachings of Cerinthus, but it is equally true that there are other passages (chap. i. 32, &c.) which may be held to favour rather than to controvert these teachings. In any case, it seems to us that if John's design had been to controvert the pecu-

liar tenets of Cerinthus, he would have expressed himself in very different and in more definite terms; and that whatever antagonism there may be in the fourth Gospel to these tenets, it does not appear, either from its plan or its contents, that it was his main design to refute them. There is no reason, therefore, to suppose that the special object of John in writing his Gospel was to expose and overthrow the errors of Cerinthus.

There are some, again, of opinion that the design of John's Gospel was to refute the Ebionites or Judaizing Christians. They held the common Jewish notion about Jesus, that He was no more than a man, and that the peculiarities of the Jewish and those of the Christian religions were united in a perfect system. There is no doubt, nor will it be denied, that these notions are in direct opposition to the teachings of John's Gospel. But it does not follow that it was the express design of his Gospel to refute these notions. The passages which have been brought forward to support the hypothesis of its anti-Ebionistic aim are such as these—i. 13, 17; iii. 3; iv. 21; and so on. Now an examination of these passages cannot fail to satisfy us that the doctrine they lay down is strongly opposed to Ebionitism; but there is nothing in them to show that the apostle specially designed his Gospel to refute that heresy. The most, we think, that can be said is, that the doctrine which is contained in these passages is the very opposite of Ebionitism. The

fourth Gospel, like the other Gospels, is adverse to Jewish error. But it is likewise adverse to *every* error; and as there is no evidence that the aim of the Gospel was the refutation of Ebionistic heresy more than any other, it follows that the supposition of a distinctly anti-Ebionistic design in its composition is untenable.

There are others, again, who are of opinion that the fourth Gospel was chiefly directed against the Docetæ and Docetism. The Docetæ denied the reality of Christ's humanity, and argued that His human appearance was a mere vision. The texts brought forward to establish the supposition of our Gospel's anti-Docetic aim are—i. 14; xix. 34; xx. 20, 27; but these texts prove very little. It is indeed doubtful whether the Docetæ had any definite and distinct views at the time the Gospel was written. But even on the supposition that their peculiar tenets were known, and that the texts referred to are in direct opposition to these tenets, it by no means follows that the Gospel was designed wholly or mainly to refute them. There is nothing in the plan of the Gospel or in its contents to justify or establish any such conclusion. It may be mentioned here, that Baur is of opinion that Docetism is the doctrine of the evangelist himself. But for this opinion there is no foundation except in the imagination of the writer, and there is no need to refute it. Baur maintains that the fourth Gospel has as its main topic not so much the man Christ Jesus, in whom the

Logos became incarnate, as the Logos who was clothed in a phenomenal body. The proof of this is said to be in the prologue, and in vii. 10, viii. 59, x. 30. But an examination of these passages will convince any candid inquirer that they contain no such views as those which Baur finds in them, and that the doctrine not only of these passages, but of the Gospel generally, is wholly opposed to any such views.

Macdonald on this subject says: "The opinion that John had a polemical object has no better foundation than that he wrote to provide a supplement to the other Gospels. He wrote not primarily to refute errorists, but that men might believe and have life. The glorious conquest of Christ over evil (or His power to effect this conquest), shown to men in order that they might believe and have life through believing—this was the apostle's purpose. Who so fit to write on such a theme as he that had been a near spectator both of the struggle and the victory? Such an explanation is as far as possible from the notion that the writer had in view (controversially) new doctrines about the person of the Lord; and from the opinion, to which the ancient writers gave too much countenance, that this is a polemic against Cerinthus, and Ebion, and the Gnostics. One writing of the incarnation, in the midst of certain errors, could not but write so that the errors should meet their refutation. But there is no pervading controversial aim; of

direct polemical matter there is not one syllable in this Gospel. It is polemical in that, being true, it is a touchstone of error; it is against the modern Socinus almost in the same sense that it is against the ancient Cerinthus." ¹

It appears, then, from all we have advanced, that the apostle's design in his Gospel was neither to complete the Synoptic Gospels nor to refute existing heresies. Its main purpose was neither supplemental nor polemical. It was chiefly, as we have said, to give a biography of Jesus, and to represent Him to His readers as the Christ and the Son of God, and to encourage faith in Him as the source of everlasting life to all believers. Its object was to exalt the Logos who had become incarnate, and to give the history of all that was significant in Christ's life. It may be admitted that in writing his Gospel John was influenced, unconsciously it may be, but no less truly, by the prevailing heresies of his time; and it may be admitted also that his Gospel contains doctrines which are in direct antagonism to these heresies. The main purpose of his Gospel, however, was, not to overthrow any doctrinal errors that might prevail in his time, but to promote a living faith in Him who is the "true Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

¹ Life and Writings of St John, pp. 275-6.

VIII.

CONCLUSION.

ST JOHN'S GOSPEL, whose apostolic authorship we have endeavoured in the preceding pages to examine and establish, is one whose preciousness cannot be over-rated. It has been with thousands in all ages the favourite Gospel, and to it men of all religious tendencies, however diverse and dissimilar, have turned with fondness and appreciation. The more closely we consider its contents, the more will we be convinced that no estimate we may form of it can be regarded as excessive. The heavenliness of its doctrines, the spirituality of its utterances, the sublimity of its style and tone, entitle it to the first rank in evangelical narrative. Though we have no intention of elevating the fourth Gospel at the expense of the Synoptists, yet we think we may safely affirm that it reveals to us deeper and more divine things, encircles us with higher and more heavenly influences, and inspires us with richer and more animating hopes, and that the light that comes from its pages shines with a clearer and a brighter

radiance. The other Gospels show us the way to the holy city, but John's gives us a glimpse of the glory that is within. They carry us from strength to strength till we appear before God in Zion, but John's introduces us at once into the Holy of Holies. The following words are not more beautiful than true: "Now I do not know a Gospel so full of love, so rich in inexhaustible comfort, as the Gospel according to St John. It is literally the simplest and sublimest, and, if one may speak by comparison, it is the most popular Gospel. It is that to which sickness has recourse when the lights of this world grow dim, and the prospects of another begin to dawn upon the soul; it is that to which we have recourse in suffering and tears and grief, in which we find sweet springs of comfort in the hour of death. No Gospel has been so read, no book so studied; and yet the better we know it, the richer and more instructive, not the more wearisome, it appears to us. We know that an ordinary piece of music, for instance, becomes, by frequent repetition, so unpleasant, that we would rather not hear it; but the great strains of the great masters of song are so beautiful, so rich, that the oftener we hear them the more welcome they are, and the more we appreciate them. It is yet more so with this blessed book; the oftener we read it, the more instructive it becomes. Nobody ever wearies of these beautiful words, nobody ever objects to hear one of those chapters read, and read,

and read again. It is like a precious gem ever put in new lights,—it refracts and reflects new splendour; and the oftener we see and understand it, the more we love it, and he that knows it best, wants it to be read the oftenest.” The eulogy that is pronounced upon John’s Gospel in these well-expressed sentences will be generally accepted. The eulogy is not excessive, nor is the estimate exaggerated. The following recognition of its value is admirably stated, and is worthy of being quoted in our concluding pages: “The Gospel of St John is the Gospel of Gospels, as the Epistle to the Romans is the Epistle of Epistles. It is the most remarkable as well as the most important literary production ever composed by man. It is a marvel even in the marvellous Book of books. All the literature of the world could not replace it. It is the most spiritual and ideal of Gospels. It introduces us into the Holy of Holies in the history of our Lord; it brings us, as it were, into His immediate presence, so that we behold face to face the true Shekinah, ‘the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.’ It presents, in fairest harmony, the highest knowledge and the deepest love of Christ. It gives us the clearest view of His incarnate divinity and His perfect humanity. It sets Him forth as the eternal Word, who was the source of life from the beginning, and the organ of all the revelations of God to man; as the Fountain of living water, that quenches the thirst of the soul; as the Light of

the world, that illuminates the darkness of sin and error; as the Resurrection and the Life, that destroys the terror of death. It reflects the lustre of the transfiguration on the mount, yet subdued by the holy sadness of Gethsemane. It abounds in festive joy and gladness over the amazing love of God, but mixed with grief over the ingratitude and obtuseness of unbelieving men. It breathes the air of peace, and yet sounds at times like the peal of thunder from the other world; it soars boldly and majestically like the eagle towards the uncreated source of light, and yet hovers as gently as a dove over the earth. It is sublime as a seraph and simple as a child; high and serene as the heaven, deep and unfathomable as the sea. It is the plainest in speech and the profoundest in meaning. To it, more than to any portion of the Scripture, applies the familiar comparison of a river deep enough for the elephant to swim, with shallows for the lamb to wade. It is the Gospel of love, life, and light; the Gospel of the heart taken from the very heart of Christ, on which the beloved disciple leaned at the Last Supper. It is the type of the purest forms of mysticism. It has an irresistible charm for speculative and contemplative minds, and furnishes inexhaustible food for meditation and devotion. It is the Gospel of peace and Christian union, and a prophecy of that blessed future when all the discords of the Church militant on earth shall be solved in the harmony of the Church triumphant in

heaven." The estimate of John's Gospel which is given in the preceding quotations, and which we heartily endorse, is confirmed by the judgment of critics in all ages. It seems to us advisable to give one or two quotations in this place in illustration of our statement; and from these it will abundantly appear how highly our Gospel has been esteemed. Augustine, whose words are not more appreciatory than beautiful, says: "In the four Gospels, or rather, in the four books of the one Gospel, the Apostle St John, not undeservedly with reference to his spiritual understanding compared to an eagle, has lifted higher and far more sublimely than the other three his proclamation, and in lifting it up he has wished our hearts also to be lifted. For the other three evangelists walked, so to speak, on earth with our Lord as man—of His divinity they said but few things; but John, as if it oppressed him to walk on earth, has opened his words as it were with a burst of thunder, has lifted himself not only above earth and every sphere of sky and heaven, but even above every host of angels, and every order of invisible powers, and reaches to Him by whom all things were made, as he says, 'In the beginning was the Word,' &c. He proclaims other things in keeping with this great sublimity with which he begins, and speaks of the divinity of our Lord as no other person has spoken. He pours forth that into which he had drunk. For not without a reason is it mentioned in his own Gospel, that at the

feast he reclined upon the bosom of his Lord. From that bosom he had in secrecy drunk in the stream, but, what he drank in secret he poured forth openly.”¹ Origen writes in equally laudatory language, and says: “We may presume, then, to say that the Gospels are the first-fruits of all the Scriptures, and the first-fruits of the Gospels is that of John, into whose meaning no man can enter, unless he has reclined upon the bosom of Jesus.”² Claudius, in striking and sublime phraseology, thus expresses himself: “I love best of all to read in St John. There is in him something so perfectly wonderful—dusk and night, and the quick lightning throbbing through them! The soft clouds of evening, and behind the mass the big full moon bodily!—something so sad, so high, so full of presage, that one can never weary of it. When I read John, it always seems to me that I see him before me, reclining at the Last Supper on the bosom of his Lord, as if his angel held the light for me, and at certain parts would place his arm around me, and whisper something in my ear. I am far from understanding all I read, yet often John’s idea seems

¹ Tract. 36 in Iohan.—In quatuor evangelis seu potius in quatuor libris unius evangelii sanctus Iohannes apostolus, non immerito secundum intelligentiam spiritalem aquilæ comparatus, altius multoque sublimius aliis tribus erexit prædicationem suam, et in eius erectione etiam corda nostra erigi voluit, &c.

² Com., p. 6 ed. Hueb.—Τολμητέον τολῶν εἰπεῖν ἀπαρχὴν μὲν πασῶν γραφῶν εἰνῶν εἶναι τὰ εὐαγγέλια, τῶν δὲ εὐαγγελίων ἀπαρχὴν τὸ κατὰ Ἰωάννην· ὅτι τὸν νοῦν εὐδεῖς δύναται λαβεῖν μὴ ἀναπεσὼν ἐπὶ τὸ στήθος Ἰησοῦ.

to hover before me in the distance; and even when I look into a place that is entirely dark, I have a pre-sension of a great, glorious sense, which I shall some day understand, and hence I catch so eagerly at every new exposition of the Gospel of John.”¹ Lange, in speaking of the significance and the spirituality of John’s writings, and of the influence they have exerted in past times, expresses himself in equally appreciatory language, and says: “John has exerted in all ages the mightiest influence on the course of the Church. This influence is far from being fully appreciated. In the ancient Church it found a concrete embodiment in the Johannean school, whose import is yet further to be understood. In the Middle Ages it was John who in his writings comforted and supported the Church, when under the corruptions of the hierarchy she was tempted to despair. And it has long since been perceived that the Gospel of John forms the culmination of the evangelic history, as theology will more and more acknowledge that John’s type of doctrine forms the consummation of the apostolic theology.”²

In the sentiments which are expressed so beautifully and forcibly in these quotations we fully concur. The estimate they supply of St John’s Gospel is no exaggeration. It is an estimate which has met with general, we might say with universal, acceptance. In all ages,

¹ Wandsbecker Bote, Th. i. p. 9, A.

² Com. on John’s Gospel, i. 43, 44.

and among all sections of the Christian Church, the fourth Gospel has been most highly prized and profoundly revered. It has been one of the most cherished books of Holy Writ, and its words have been, in the experience of thousands, sweeter than honey and better than gold. In their needs, however great—in their cravings, however deep—in their aspirations, however soaring, men have found in our Gospel something to solace and animate them. In the perusal of its pages they have found those words which make wise unto salvation, and in their acceptance of these they have become to them the words of eternal life. To deprive us of our Gospel, then, would be to inflict upon us the direst calamity. It would be to wrest from us one of the best gifts that Heaven has bestowed—to rob us of one of the richest legacies in our spiritual treasury—to blot out one of the brightest stars in our spiritual firmament—to dash our highest hopes—and to damp our holiest aspirations. Let it only be credited that the fourth Gospel is not an apostolic work—that it has been wrongly and falsely assigned to John—that it is the production of sub-apostolic times—and the consequences would be disastrous in the extreme. Let it go forth to the world, and let it be accepted, that John knew nothing of that Gospel—that he had no hand in its composition—that it is at best a fiction and a forgery—and the blow that would thereby be given to our Christian hopes and religious impulses would drive us

wellnigh to despair. Under such a calamity, it would be no extravagance to clothe ourselves with sackcloth, and in the crash and confusion to cry, "Better that we had never been born!" It will not lessen our lamentation nor assuage our anxiety to assure us that the question of authorship is of slight importance, and that the truthfulness of the contents is the chief consideration. The view which Keim holds on this point is one with which we can have no sympathy. He asserts that "its beauty, its edifying virtue, its holiness, the pleasant tone of many of its passages, is worthy of having issued from the mouth of Jesus. . . . All that," he says, "does not depend upon a name, as those think who dishonour what is holy when such a name is wanting." There are others who adhere to Keim's opinion, and contend, that if it could be shown that John was not the author of the fourth Gospel, no great harm would follow. But to us it seems that the results, in a Scriptural and spiritual sense, would be disastrous in the extreme; and that uncertainty as to its authorship would tend to lessen the value and depreciate the excellence of its disclosures. "If . . . the Gospel of John is authentic, if the discourses which he puts into the mouth of Jesus are the truth, then Jesus is the Word made flesh—a divine gift, the proof of a boundless love in God. Immediately heaven opens, and humanity there contemplates a Father's heart, to which it has the fullest access. From this open heaven descends an

outpouring of life, which penetrates the human soul, and imparts to it the powers of the world to come. If it be not authentic, heaven is closed. There only remains of the life of Jesus the love of an excellent man for his brethren. The Father has given nothing of *His own*. It is obliterated. Jesus has done and suffered more for us than He. He has loved us more generously than God Himself. We can no longer say of God with Paul, 'He that spared not His own Son,' nor what follows in Rom. viii. 32." These words show us very plainly and instructively how much depends on the question at issue, and express very clearly what mischief would result from any adverse decision. Those who are loudest in their contention that it is a matter of little importance who was its author, and who are boldest in maintaining that there is nothing in a name, seem to forget this in their persistent and vigorous refusal to attach John's name to it. If there is nothing, as they allege, in a name, it seems strange that their whole aim is to prove that John's name does not belong to the fourth Gospel and is wrongly assigned to it.

In bringing our remarks to a close, we wish it to be understood that, in speaking of those who have assailed John's Gospel, we have endeavoured to deal with them in no unkindly or uncharitable terms. At the same time, it is impossible to refrain from saying, that in the study of their writings, and in the examination of their argu-

ments, our task has not been one of unbroken satisfaction. The conviction has forced itself upon us that they have treated our Gospel, occasionally at least, with unfair criticism, and have gone out of their way to multiply objections. It is scarcely possible to read their works—the works of Renan, Strauss, Tayler, ‘Supernatural Religion,’ and others of the same school—without the feeling that they entered upon their investigation with no friendly, if not with hostile, purposes. Occasionally, at least, they seem to have been influenced by an animus which is expressed both fitly and fully in the old Latin axiom: “I will either find or make a discrepancy.”¹ In saying this, we do not undervalue their talents nor seek to detract from their learning. What we regret is, that they should employ these in the service of scepticism and in the war against truth. But the results of modern criticism are not such as to fill us with anxiety and alarm. At best, the objections which have been urged against our Gospel are more pretentious than formidable. Some of them are only imaginary, and others are vastly exaggerated. The more they are examined into, the more shadowy and superficial do they appear. The defences that surround our Gospel are sure and impregnable, and it is no rash prediction to affirm that “no weapon formed against it shall ever prosper.” The opposition with which it has been and still is assailed, will, we

¹ Aut inveniam discrepantiam aut faciam.

have no doubt, like that of the Alogi in earlier times, be gradually silenced, and will finally disappear; and :— our Gospel, with its glory unclouded, its lustre untarnished, and its power to satisfy men's spiritual cravings undiminished, will still abide, bearing to human hearts the message of Heaven's mercy, and proclaiming throughout the world "the words of eternal life."

THE END.



00066860

